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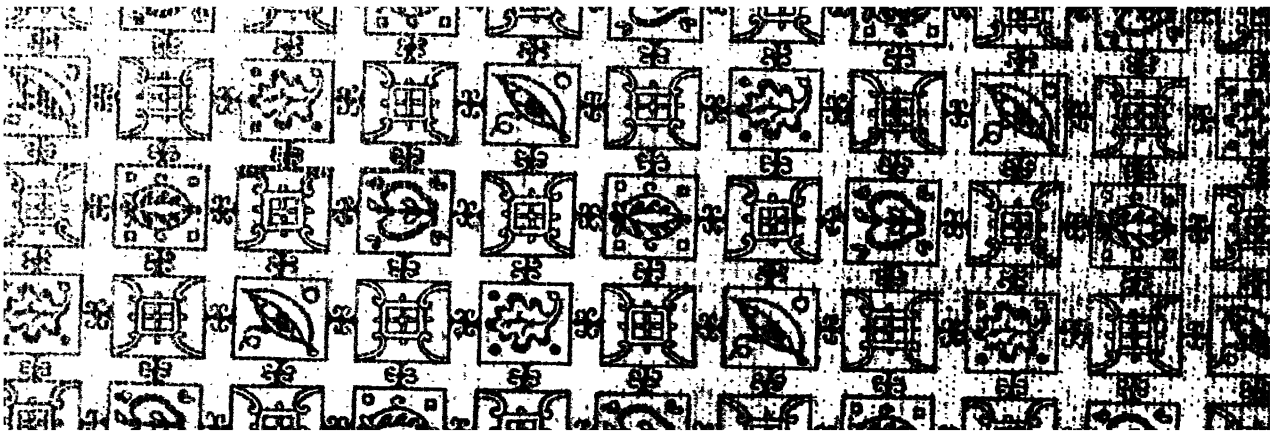

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FOUNDATIONS OF NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

THE NATIONAL MIND

English · French · German

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DEMIASHKEVICH, THE NATIONAL MIND

W. P. I

TO KNOW THYSELF, COMPARE THYSELF TO OTHERS

—Goethe: *Torquato Tasso*
(Antonio, v, 5)

Chapter I

THE GOOD MAN

THE TANGIBLE ENGLISHMAN

ACCORDING to Emerson, a tourist landing at Liverpool should seek to solve two problems: Why is England what it is? What are the elements of that power which accounts for the high position of England in the world?[1] As to the first of these problems, we are unable to offer a solution. We do not know to what degree dissimilarities among nations regarding such matters as customs, crafts, the fine arts, and national ideals are due to race, soil, and historical circumstances; whether such differences should be "traced to pedigree or climate, to geographical sites or to systems of government."[2] Neither did we discover one who fully answered the query implied in this statement of Tacitus: "Who were the original inhabitants of Britain, whether they were indigenous or foreign, is, as usual among barbarians, little known."[3] With relation to subsequent ethnographic developments in the British Isles, we shall limit ourselves, in all humility, to repeating Daniel Defoe's reflection:

> "Thus from a mixture of all kinds began
> That heterogeneous thing, an Englishman."[4]

[1] *English Traits,* Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1888, p. 38.
[2] Dixon, W. M., *The Englishman,* New York, Longmans, Green & Co., 1931, p. 18.
[3] Tacitus, *Agricola,* Ch. 11.
[4] *The True-Born Englishman,* I, i, p. 279.

We shall think of the English, and later of the French and the Germans, as ethnic-psychological groups; that is, groups the members of which have in common certain basic mental traits, such as beliefs, aspirations, tastes, aversions, qualities, and defects. We agree with Julian S. Huxley and A. S. Haddon in their conclusion relative to the biological background of western nations:

> "In most cases it is impossible to speak of the existing population of any region as belonging to a definite 'race,' since as a result of migration and crossing it includes many types and their various combinations. For existing populations the word *race* should be banished, and the descriptive and noncommittal term ethnic group should be substituted." [1]

Many may question the possibility of a satisfactory solution even of the second and more limited problem formulated by Emerson. Our humble reply to such a challenge is the entire treatise on English national psychology which follows. Yet, to avoid the charge of evasiveness, we shall open our study with a discussion, however brief and sketchy, of the general problem of whether it is possible seriously to contend that an objective, tangible picture of a nation's collective character can be drawn. This question has been frequently raised, and we must face it at the very beginning and throughout the course of our study.

To paraphrase the philosopher, all that exists is knowable; even the innermost secrets of the individual's complex inner life can be charted by psychologists who are gifted with the intuitive genius of a Dostoevsky. It seems but right to point out, however, that it is much easier to know a nation than to

[1] *We Europeans: A Survey of 'Racial' Problems,* New York, Harper & Brothers, 1935, p. 268.

know an individual, even though a nation's spokesmen, on whom we must depend in the last analysis for the revelation of national psychology, frequently lend themselves to political coquetry and to elaborate stage-play at home and abroad.

Even when such a scholar as Professor Dixon warns us that "the Englishman remains, as he has always been, a somewhat incomprehensible being," [1] we refuse to be discouraged in our effort to understand the English national character or mentality. We do not deny the difficulty of our investigation, but we take comfort from the fact that Professor Dixon's diffidence in this field has not prevented him from writing a valuable study on English national character.

It is a great pity that successful statesmen and politicians have refrained from summing up for posterity their intimate thoughts concerning the virtues and defects of the peoples whom they ruled. Their personal success testifies that they well understood those qualities; it proves, consequently, the possibility of an adequate comprehension of national psychology. But even in the absence of such ethnological memoirs—what a priceless source of information and invaluable help in training for leadership these would be!—it is imperative and, happily, it is possible for students of comparative education, comparative literature, and comparative politics to gather from various sources a wide range of evidence regarding the intimate, as well as the more tangible, collective characteristics of nations.

To turn from these historical and philosophical generalities to our collective Englishman and his mentality, what Arnold said of him is, of course, true: "There is, in the Englishman, a certain admixture and strife of elements." The same is true, however, of other nationals. It is true also that the term "Eng-

[1] Dixon, W. M., *op. cit.*, p. 33.

lishman," when it is taken to designate the English national character, does not admit of short definition. Yet it permits a cataloguing of the more typical, that is the more persistent, historical characteristics found among the English people of all classes and conditions from "the rich man in his castle" to "the poor man at his gate." From these characteristics a sort of collective image can be made, as from thousands of superimposed likenesses, a composite photograph can be produced from which the purely personal, individual variants are eliminated.[1] The norm or collective type which distinguishes the English from other national groups can thus be attained.

We shall seek, then, to catch a composite picture of the English nation, which may show the characteristic English attitudes toward the fundamental problems of life, individual and social, material and spiritual. This, if properly taken, will present a tangible image of the collective Englishman. He is not, any more than any other collective individual, inevitably destined to remain a hypothetical figure. In order that his true face may be drawn, however, it is necessary to employ a broad brush and to proceed carefully, with earnest consideration of the points of orientation—political, economic, literary, artistic, and philosophical—to be found in the records of national life.

To be sure, there are all sorts of individual Englishmen. There are English expatriates who despise all that is English; there are Englishmen who embrace Mormonism in Utah and Englishmen who hide their national identity under the robings of Buddhist priests. But such Englishmen are significantly few. Similar individual variations from the national type are to be found in all nationalities, and their occurrence

[1] Cf. Masterman, C. F. G., *The Condition of England,* London, Methuen & Co., 1909, p. 10.

should not discourage the student of comparative national psychology or vitiate his vision of the type that occurs, historically, with the highest degree of frequency, in other words, the average or general type.

> "All the Herries I have met, whether in London or here, have something in common although they are all so different. What it is I cannot say. It is as though, inside the family, they are all against one another, but that against the outside world they are all united. . . ." [1]

Hugh Walpole's Herries family, whose genealogy is traced back to 1600, has the edge, as a sociological document, even on the Forsytes, in that the Herries are country stock, with roots still strong in the soil. As we read in a review in *The Times Literary Supplement,* March 20, 1930, "The Herries family is John Bull." The reviewer aptly chose the following quotation to illustrate his assertion:

> "At the moment of birth young Herries know precisely the sensible thing to do—how to watch and wait and avoid all excitement . . . to believe only what they can see, to handle only what they can in reality touch. . . . They have made England what it is. . . ."

From time to time an exceptional Herries comes into the world, a Herries who does not fit in the series, so to speak, who does not know what he wants; but such exceptions are rare.[2]

National traits of a people certainly undergo distinct modifications in the course of time, but the fundamental type is strangely persistent. In the composite photograph, dim with

[1] From *The Fortress,* by Hugh Walpole, copyright 1932 by Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., New York, p. 272.

[2] Cf. Walpole, H., "Et la Sainte lui sourit," *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 15 avril 1937, p. 849.

age, of the English of the seventeenth century, for example, one can recognize, without unduly stretching one's imagination, the English of our own day. The contours of national mentalities are perhaps not fixed with the same permanence as the contours of lakes and mountains and may be defined only in relative terms. On the other hand, the traits of national character clearly are more stable than the cranial and facial characteristics of the various ethnographic divisions of a race. It would be highly unhistorical to regard the contours of national mentalities as mere evanescent and unsubstantial clouds hurrying across the firmament of history and vanishing in some unknown expanse where abides the unity of all differences. In the crowds of shop girls and office and factory workers who inundate London's Liverpool Street Station in the late afternoon, one would see fewer of the large-limbed, yellow-haired, blue-eyed type so admired by Tacitus. Yet one would find in these Londoners of our own day much of the spirit of ancient Britain; the very words of Tacitus might be taken as descriptive of the British working class of today:

> "As for the people themselves, they discharge energetically the levies and tributes and imperial obligations imposed upon them, provided always there be no wrongdoing. They are restive under wrong: for their subjection, while complete enough to involve obedience, does not involve slavery." [1]

For good or evil, Mr. Britling's warning holds true: "You think that John Bull is dead and a strange generation is wearing his clothes. I think you'll find very soon it's the old John Bull." [2]

[1] Tacitus, *Agricola*, Ch. 13.

[2] Wells, H. G., *Mr. Britling Sees It Through*, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1917, p. 34.

RESISTANCE TO ADVERSE FORCES

It is true that there is no more rigid psychological law of nature than that which says, "Man is what he does; a people is its performance."[1] But this law is not so simple in its application. In order to understand important actions of an individual man or of collective man, the nation, it is often necessary to understand his intentions, and to know what he seeks to accomplish, what he likes to have done. Indeed, it is probably much more accurate to say that man is what he likes rather than to say that man is what he does. The surest key to the mysteries of the hidden soul of men or nations seems to lie in the study of their intimate scale of values, of the loyalties which direct their preferences and dictate their sacrifices. Accordingly, the first condition for comprehending the English mind appears to be a realization of the fact that among the primary preoccupations of the Englishman is the problem of good and evil.

In his conception of the good man, good character holds the first place. This attitude of mind is not, in itself, exclusively English; but there are certain component elements distinctly English in the Briton's conception of what constitutes good character. The Englishman demands, before he grants a man the distinction of being considered a person of good character, the possession of certain characteristics, blended in a distinctive manner and degree, which lend to the English conception of the good man a tangible peculiarity.

The very intensity of the Englishman's interest in good character justifies the assertion that the English are more

[1] Cf. Dixon, W. M., *op. cit.*, p. 115.

ardently convinced than other nations are of the truth of the celebrated reflection found in Aristotle's *Politics:*

> ". . . man, when perfected, is the best of animals; but, when devoid of law and justice, he is the worst of all; since armed injustice is the more dangerous, and since he is equipped at birth with arms, meant to be used by intelligence and virtue, which he may use for the worst ends." [1]

The Englishman is convinced that there is no substitute for good character. Of the major nations of Europe, England has been the least indifferent to the moral character of her poets. Experience, the Englishman believes, bears out Macaulay's warning that nine-tenths of the calamities which have befallen the human race have no other origin than the union of high intelligence with low desires.

Critics at home, and more especially abroad, sometimes speak of the English race as—

> "A race that binds
> Its body in chains and calls them Liberty,
> And calls each fresh link Progress." [2]

British custom and conventionality continually reforge these essential links. We well might ask, What are the most important of the links that, according to English standards, should bind the man of good character to the accepted mold?

Perhaps the first among these old links continually renewed is one that may be described as resistance to adverse forces. It is the Briton's refusal to truckle to the adverse forces of nature, of time and circumstance—his bulldog insubmission to physical discomfort and pain.

[1] Book I.

[2] Buchanan, R., *Titan and Avatar.*

This important element of good character manifests itself under various forms. It may be recalled how, in May 1926, the traditional England of ordered freedom was challenged by the menace of a general strike organized by the extremists, who sought to transform an economic conflict into a struggle for the dictatorship of the so-called "proletariat." England in that crisis was saved by sane and sound individuals still to be found in sufficient numbers among her citizenship, who practice the kind of conduct which Conrad's Captain MacWhirr taught young Jukes. The captain, it will be remembered, advised the young man that whenever an emergency should come upon him, the thing to do was not to discuss theories and above all not to permit himself to be disconcerted by anything, but to keep his nerve, stand fast, facing the storm as long as it lasted. "Facing it—always facing it—that's the way to get through."[1]

In Galsworthy's *The Freelands,* we find a telling portrait of the grandmother who refused to lose her "form" to advancing age. She would "ascend the stairs, breathless, because she *would* breathe through her nose to the very last step." John "worshipped that kind of stoicism which would die with its head up rather than live with its tail down." At the finish of his school mile, though he lost, he found himself entirely rewarded with the remark which he overheard a spectator make: " 'I like that young ——'s running; he breathes through his —— nose.' At that moment, if he had stooped to breathe through his mouth, he must have won; as it was, he had lost in great distress and perfect form."[2] Historical testimony to this worship of good form even under the most adverse cir-

[1] Conrad, J., *Typhoon,* New York, Doubleday, Page and Co., 1923, p. 89.
[2] Galsworthy, J., *The Freelands,* New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926, p. 175.

cumstances is given in the memoirs of Antoinette Tierce, a heroic woman of Lille, who writes of a Tommy to whom she gave refuge in 1917:

> "Furthermore, he had a warm heart, but all his words and all his gestures, however trivial, seemed to be inspired by the motto beloved of every loyal subject of His Majesty: 'Be British and keep cool.'" [1]

The value which the British put upon man's power of resistance to adverse forces finds expression even in their horticultural preferences. In J. B. Priestley's *Faraway,* the exiled Mrs. Jackson offers a typical explanation of her ingrained distaste for the tropical vegetation, the climate, and the natives of Tahiti:

> "I am sick of these big showy sticky sickly flowers. Those little wild flowers we have at home that come peeping up in the woods and the hedges, when it is still cold and wet . . . a handful of them's worth more than all this sickly tropical stuff put together. . . . It's all too sloppy and *easy* here. Yes, easy. You know what I mean. The sun just shines and shines and when rain is wanted it comes pelting down for an hour or two and that's that. There's no cold wind, no frost and snow and sleet, no mists and fog. They call it a human paradise and all that, but I don't want a human paradise. And, anyhow, this isn't one, except for sloppy, lazy people who don't want to make an effort. There's such a thing as making it too easy for everybody. Look at the flowers. Those little English spring flowers have a hard time; they have to come through the snow and sleet and east winds; but

[1] Tierce, A., *Between Two Fires,* London, John Lane, 1932, p. 6.

when they do come they've got something none of these flowers have got. You know that's true." [1]

Perhaps the English idea of comfort furnishes one of the most interesting and revealing expressions of English admiration for resistance to adverse forces as a necessary qualification of the good man. It is on the whole a veritably cold comfort, for it contains only the minimum of hedonistic softness. To call a true-born Englishman to witness on this point, Harold E. Scarborough warns a prospective visitor to England as follows:

"He would certainly be pained by the tepid soup, the discouraged slab of cod or halibut, the flavorless beef or mutton, the overboiled potatoes and cabbage, and the soggy pudding or dry cheese that would constitute his luncheon in the restaurant car; but the service would be such as some other countries could not buy for love or money. And as for the coffee—but enough! There is no compensation for, and few antidotes to, the concoction that in these islands is supposed to be coffee. . . .

"Of course, in the matter of hotels and restaurants, England, outside of London, still is largely in the Dark Ages. One does not dwell more than one is forced to upon the typical hotel bedroom which is to be found everywhere except in the larger cities. The room, to begin with, is almost invariably chilly and damp. A depressed carpet long since has given up the unequal struggle of toning down the frightful wall paper. A melancholy fan-like spill of white paper graces the fireplace where coal should be blazing; a lumpy bed of jangling iron or creak-

[1] Priestley, J. B., *Faraway*, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1932, pp. 327 ff.

ing cheap wood inspires the guest with a determination to reach it late and leave it early. An electric-light bulb depending from the center of the ceiling and another over the dressing table permit him to see to manipulate the Victorian water jug, wash basin, and slop bowl; there is seldom a reading light. For his aesthetic gratification there are upon the walls steel engravings of 'The Stag at Bay' or 'The Doctor.' It is clean and free from vermin, but so are some jails.

"No, distinctly, English hotels are not civilized." [1]

To be sure, the hedonistic element in English everyday life has been increasing—a result, perhaps, of the reappraisal of values growing out of the agitations following the World War. The major part of his comfort-producing activities, however, is still motivated by the Englishman's tenacious will to assert himself and to preserve his material possessions against adverse external forces, and against the humiliating tendencies of things in general to warp, to decay—indeed, against man's own tendency to slump in the line of least resistance. When he thinks of comfort, the Englishman seems to think in the first place of solid and massive things, so constructed as to triumph over the disintegrating forces of time. During the World War, the French combatants were impressed with the well-groomed appearance of the English fighting units. In the memoirs of a French eyewitness, this significant testimony is offered:

"At noon orders come for the first and second battalions to move up to the front at Ypres. All roads are clogged with advancing troops. The jam at crossroads is so great

[1] From *England Muddles Through*, by H. E. Scarborough, New York, 1932, pp. 22 f., p. 106. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

that all military efforts to regulate troop movements are ineffective. We join forces with the British, who appear to be abundantly equipped with adequate supplies of food and unlimited transports of infantry and artillery. One cannot help admiring the spirited, well-fed English horses with their shiny skins. What a contrast they present to our own horses! Our men express their enthusiasm at the sight of the freshly painted, new carriages, and the armored cars equipped with machine guns. Especially are they impressed by the sight of automobiles carrying tea kettles and distilled water. Our men, very much encouraged, confidently predict victory over the Germans: 'What can Old Fritz do against such troops so superbly prepared?'" [1]

Another French observer, M. André Chevrillon, comments at length upon the shining, compact, and well-ordered gear and utensils of British soldiers in and behind the trenches. He reflects, sympathetically and admiringly, upon the endless effort, vigilance, and patience necessary to keep traction horses at the front as clean and shining as officers' mounts. M. Chevrillon mentions that not infrequently French officers criticized their English colleagues for confusing means and ends in this matter of keeping things not only in a state of thorough efficiency, but also up to peace-time standards of appearance. The English rejoined by pointing out that the French workman is not really interested in his job unless it demands high craftsmanship; that, as a result, many French articles of war equipment proved too flimsy for hard usage, and that they were poorly kept even when they fully deserved

[1] Chamard, E., "Zonnebeke, Sentinelle avancée d'Ypres," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1er novembre 1935, p. 106.

a better treatment. The English referred, in particular, to the famous French seventy-five mm. field-gun as "the worst kept, though probably the best in Europe." [1]

It is a Frenchman, the astute M. Chevrillon, who, in his analysis of the philosophy of British comfort, succeeds in explaining why the Englishman, though rarely comfortable at home if judged by non-English standards, managed to introduce order and routine and even luxuries into the very trenches:

> "We came to understand that the habit and the need of what, in war time, seemed to us excessive comfort and luxuries, had their roots in most virile qualities of energy, endurance, contempt of death, and heroic sense of duty. In a degree, such disposition of the mind attested virtues that add much to the triumph of man over the external world, of the mind over matter. Indeed, one must possess a great capacity for resistance to tedium and have stable, solid nerves, to be able, war or no war, to exercise the foresight and effort necessary to keep things in such orderly fashion as the English do. The undying representative of the English race is and remains Robinson Crusoe, intent upon the labors of settling down, unflinching in his solitary, conscientious, and ceaseless struggle against the hostility of the external material world." [2]

[1] Cf. the journal of Mrs. Thrale, who toured France in 1775 in company with Dr. Johnson, and thus reports on the court ceremony of "dining in public":

"The King & Queen dined together in another Room. They had a Damask Table Cloth neither course (*sic*) nor fine, without anything under, or any Napkin over. Their Dishes were Silver, not clean and bright like Silver in England—but they were Silver." (*The French Journals of Mrs. Thrale and Dr. Johnson*, Manchester University Press, 1932, pp. 124-125.)

[2] "Visites au front: sur le front anglais," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1er juillet 1917, p. 51.

This Robinson Crusoe spirit made the English sanitary service famous at the front. The unflagging zeal of "sanitary inspectors," who directed a not less zealous and efficient personnel, turned disease-ridden neighborhoods into quite passable health resorts, where "the construction of baths and laundries were minute details compared with the difficulties of coping with drainage and flies," [1] as a war diarist rightly observes. The same diarist relates "a typical incident" which seems well worth mentioning. A health officer, who was "as much a tartar on the score of flies" as he was on the subject of drainage and the boiling of milk, was inspecting a field hospital. Having gruntingly approved everything, he suddenly noticed a solitary fly, which had survived the staff's relentless war on the species, crawling upon the ceiling. "Adjutant," roared the Major, "what's that fly doing here?" Terrified, the Adjutant muttered tremulously: "I don't know, sir, to be sure. But I'll ask the Sergeant-Major!" [1]

The Puritan spirit of English comfort is probably best attested by the national neglect of good food and good wine. Mr. Bernard Shaw pays an unintentional compliment to the *vir bonus britannicus* when he says: "An Englishman thinks that he is moral when he is only uncomfortable." [2] In fact, a good Englishman is inclined to feel guilty and repentant of his well-being. It may be said of him that his comforts afford minor compensation to a man accustomed and ever ready to sustain the major hardships of life. The following bit of conversation between John Buchan's Lord Clanroyden ("Sandy") and Major-General Sir Richard Hannay illustrates the attitude in question:

[1] Finzi, K. J., *Eighteen Months in the War Zone*, London, Cassell & Co., 1916, pp. 181, 183.
[2] *Man and Superman*, New York, Brentano's, 1914, p. 102.

"Sandy, as he sniffed the scents coming up from the woods and the ploughlands, seemed to feel the magic of the place.

" 'Pretty good,' he said. 'England is the only really comfortable spot on earth—the only place where man can be utterly at home.'

" 'Too comfortable,' I said. 'I feel I'm getting old and soft and slack. I don't deserve this place, and I'm not earning it.'

"He laughed. 'You feel like that? So do I, often. There are times at Laverlaw when it seems that that blessed glen is too perfect for fallen humanity, and that I'm not worthy of it. It was lucky that Adam was kicked out of Paradise, for he couldn't have enjoyed it if he had remained there. I've known summer mornings so beautiful that they depressed me to my boots. I suppose it is proper to feel like that, for it keeps you humble, and makes you count your mercies.'

" 'I don't know,' I said. 'It's not much good counting your mercies if you feel you have no right to them.'

" 'Oh, we've a right to them. Both of us have been through the hards. But there's no such thing as a final right. We have to go on earning them.'

" 'But we're not. I, at any rate. I'm sunk in cushions—lapped about in ease, like a man in a warm bath.'

" 'That's right enough, provided you're ready to accept the cold plunge when it comes. At least that's the way I look at it. Enjoy your comforts, but sit loose to them. You'll enjoy them all the more if you hold them on that kind of tenure, for you'll never take them for granted.' " [1]

[1] Buchan, J., *The Man from the Norlands,* Boston, 1936, pp. 31 f.; used by permission of, and by arrangement with, Houghton Mifflin Co.

It has been remarked that the English have fifty religions and only one sauce, but a Spanish visitor credits them with not even one sauce:

"England is a country that eats without sauce and gelatin. . . . The Englishmen eat much, but as they eat simple food they do not puzzle the taste and never eat more than what their stomach needs. On the other hand, the English do not have any taste. The English meal that is so practical, has a number of absurd things. I cannot yet understand why they do put their jelly to the omelette and syrup to the kidneys. The first time that they served me an omelette in this way I protested respectfully.

" 'Is it that you do not like jelly?' the waitress asked me.

" 'Yes, I like it very much.'

" 'Then, do you not like omelette?'

" 'Yes, I do also.'

" 'Then undoubtedly you must like jelly omelette?'

"That is the English logic. I was convinced, but my stomach remained skeptic." [1]

While in France eating is an art and drinking a noble rite, only Englishmen of continental culture may be expected to appreciate good food and drink. These sporadic sybarites merely go to prove the corrupting influence of less manly nations. The downright Britisher, in the words of Mr. H. A. Vachell, "detests fancy cooking and all kickshaws." [2] In the words of the same commenter, "he disdains dietetic experiments; he eyes distrustfully all dishes unfamiliar to him." [3]

[1] Camba, J., *Londres: Impressiones de un Español,* Madrid, Renacimiento, 1916, p. 11.

[2] Vachell, H. A., *The Best of England,* New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1930, pp. 196 ff.

[3] *Arising Out of That: Being an Eye-Witness' Account of the Life, Love, Laughter, Work and Thought of the Inhabitants of the Village of Venner*

The average Englishman is, in matters of food, well represented by the English skippers who were called to Paris in 1904 to give evidence before an international commission upon the action of the Russian fleet, which had inadvertently fired upon English fishing boats at Dogger Bank. The skippers complained to an English journalist who visited them at their headquarters in Paris:

> "'Them Frenchies started giving us a lot of little bits of things to eat. They started giving us a thin sort of broth with little white worms in it. So we took and flung all the lot straight out of the windows. "Give us beef and mutton," we says to that there interpreter, and he passes on the word.' 'So, in Paris,' concludes the chronicler, 'that center of culinary art, beef and mutton they got, and what Paris thought of such a reproach I did not hear.'" [1]

In a case so grave let us call in another witness, whose study of English inns marks him as an expert:

> "It was, I think, the innkeeper who discovered that a tin can be opened in a few seconds, who started the trouble. From shirking his kitchen-business by tin-opening, he sank to shirking other departments. He neglected to welcome his guests, or even to see that they were welcomed by one of his hirelings. From that he has sunk to practical jokes—to putting in his bedrooms bells that do not ring, or bells that do ring and are never answered. He has discovered that one kind of soup will do for his customers, and it does. He gives it different names, but it is always the same soup. He has fish in his bill of fare,

Situated on the Borders of Melshire and the Forest of Ys, During the Past Fifty Years, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1935, p. 199.

[1] Nevinson, H. W., *More Changes, More Chances*, New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1925, p. 347.

but from my collection of bills of fare I gather that the waters of this island afford no other fish than sole and plaice. The same with cheese. Last week, at the end of one of these mortifying lunches, hoping that I might yet get something to eat, I asked the maid what cheese they had. She said 'Cheese.' I said, 'Yes, but what cheese—Stilton, Camembert, Roquefort, Cheshire, or—' 'No, sir. Only *Cheese.*'

"A French innkeeper is delighted to meet a guest who discusses the *carte* intelligently, and orders a special and sensibly-planned meal; it is a demonstration of mutual interest in one of the graces of life. An English innkeeper positively dislikes such a guest, and sees nothing in him but a man who is disturbing the routine of tin-opening." [1]

Mr. Vachell sadly and not without an undertone of irritation concludes that "Englishmen get the food they deserve." "It is shockingly bad," he testifies, "in most inns and hotels out of the big cities; and is it pathos or bathos to record that for the most part [native] tourists believe it to be good? When I wrote on this subject some years ago a gentleman from the Antipodes took exception to what I said. He replied that he had travelled from John o' Groats to Land's End, staying in many hotels, and that he had found the food provided better than what he had at home." [2] In this connection, Mr. Vachell quotes the following epigram:

"The French have taste in all they do,
Which we are quite without,
For Nature, that to them gave goût,
To us gave only gout." [3]

[1] Burke, T., *The English Inn*, New York, Longmans, Green & Co., 1931, pp. 166-167. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 192. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 300.

M. Poincaré remarked of Edward VIII, then Prince of Wales, on the occasion of his visit to the Marquis de Breteuil in 1913: "A young man of remarkable self-restraint, he showed disdainful indifference to the excellent cuisine." [1]

It is a fact almost without precedent in history that the English ruling classes, the aristocracy, whether hereditary or monetary, have never become victims of sybaritism. The ruling classes of Greece and of Rome fell to this temptation; so have the ruling classes of the European Continent. But even when their incomes were highest and their positions appeared indefinitely secure, the ruling classes of Britain practiced a non-hedonistic or only moderately hedonistic conception of comfort.

This English attitude toward comfort is historic and extends even into the realm of the fine arts. When, for instance, the Renaissance ushered in the era of comfort-seeking, which promised to do away with the rigors of the Middle Ages, the architecture of many countries responded to the movement by endowing churches in particular with the obvious comforts of light and space and the luxury of ornament. In England, this architectural expression of the Renaissance had a very limited success. While the Italian and French Renaissance edifices, in the fitting words of Professor Esmé Wingfield-Stratford, "are instinct with a full-blooded exuberance, a pride and joyousness," the English constructions of the period retain "a certain undercurrent of melancholy, and a poetry compared with which the French style seems the most superb of rhetoric." [2]

[1] Poincaré, R., *Au service de la France,* Paris, Plon, t. I, p. 189.
[2] Wingfield-Stratford, E., *The History of British Civilization,* New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1930, p. 184.

ATHLETICS, GAMES, AND SPORTS

We shall see on more than one occasion in the course of the present study that the French, with their love of and ability for analysis and neat definitions, explain aptly the psychology of the English; while the English seldom explain themselves, and then imperfectly. It was a Frenchman, M. Jean Prevost, an instructor at Cambridge, who interpreted so well the spirit which appears to be the basis of the worth attributed by the Englishman to athletics, sports, and games. In his *Plaisirs des Sports,* M. Prevost notes the following changes which he perceived in himself as a result of systematic athletic exercises:

> "I had acquired that Puritan spirit, that sense of scruple, that craving for duty which are the inspiration of those movements, as regulated and as sacred as prayer, and which are no longer effective when the worshiper grows lukewarm in his devotions. . . . These gymnastics put muscle on me; that means little; dumb-bells or elastics will put an abundance of useless muscle in a very short while. . . . The lack of objective, which renders this form of gymnastics disagreeable to many, is made up for by an internal struggle between the active and the passive parts of the body." [1]

Like others, the English seek in sports and games the obvious, universally recognized pleasures of wholesome relaxation from mental work or worries, and of the well-being produced by invigorating, moderately competitive open-air exer-

[1] Quoted in *The European Caravan: An Anthology of the New Spirit in European Literature,* compiled and edited by Samuel Putnam and J. Bronowski, New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1931, Part I, pp. 234, 235.

cises. But the English probably more than other nations have been aware of and intent upon the character-building influence of games and sports. The cultivation of games and sports, which has long been pursued in England, not only by the leisure class but also by the middle and the lower middle class, has contributed toward developing in the nation a high degree of self-control, self-reliance, courage in the face of danger and difficulties, tenacity of purpose, and team-spirit. To borrow from a historian of cricket:

> "The laws of cricket tell of the English love of compromise between a particular freedom and a general orderliness, or legality. Macdonald's best break-back is rendered null and void if he should let his right foot stray merely an inch over the crease as he wheels his arm. Law and order are represented at cricket by the umpires in their magisterial coats (in England it is hoped these coats will never be worn as short as umpires wear them in Australia, much to the loss of that dignity which should always invest dispensers of justice). And in England umpires are seldom mobbed or treated with the contumely which is the lot of the football referee. If everything else in this nation of ours were lost but cricket—her Constitution and the laws of England of Lord Halsbury—it would be possible to reconstruct from the theory and the practice of cricket all the eternal Englishness which has gone to the establishment of that Constitution and the laws aforesaid." [1]

If the qualities of character which are at least partially promoted by games and sports are demanded of the "good man,"

[1] Cardus, N., *Cricket*, The English Heritage Series, New York, Longmans, Green & Co., 1930, pp. 5 f.

irrespective of social and economic position, they are all the more exacted from men and women who aspire to positions of leadership. Small wonder, then, that when a person is selected to fill a position of authority and command over other men, or when a political or military leader's achievements are reviewed in the daily press or a book, his distinction in sports is prominently mentioned. It is but to be expected that announcement of a new headmaster's appointment invariably includes his record as athlete and sportsman; perhaps it is equally fitting that his obituary should close with such words as these: "He never forgot that he had been tried as a wing three-quarters for Oxford University, and he was a regular attendant at the University and college football matches." [1]

In the World War chronicles of life and work at the British General Headquarters is included an element not to be found in similar publications of any other belligerent nation save those of the United States. Organized sports were an inevitable feature of life at British Headquarters. Recreation grounds were provided, and teams and matches organized as a matter of course. When the press of work and responsibilities made regular participation in the games impossible for many members of the General Headquarters, "an enthusiastic sportsman would send an urgent whip round to call attention to our deplorable neglect of the games that made England great." [2]

When the friends of Sir Douglas Haig sought his promotion to the post of Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force to succeed Field Marshal Sir John French,

[1] The obituary notice for the Rev. George Ernest Newsom of Selwyn College, Cambridge, published in *The Times, Educational Supplement* (London), February 24, 1934, No. 982, p. 62.

[2] *G. H. Q.*, London, Philip Allan & Co., 1920, p. 51.

a long list of General Haig's qualifications was put before the public. The survey of the General's career prominently mentioned that he had played with distinction on the polo team of his cavalry regiment during early service.[1] It is not surprising, to Britishers at any rate, that the last chapter in the life of General Lord Rawlinson of Trent, an outstanding English commander in the World War who later served as Commander-in-Chief in India, 1920-1925, is entitled "Polo in India." It contains the following passage:

> "On his 61st birthday the General played back in a team which won the lower handicap tournament at Delhi. The last entry in his diary runs: 'I went to Dehra to play cricket for Patial against the boys. . . . I greatly enjoyed my visit and made 21 runs.'"[2]

In vain would one search for similar notations in the biographies of Hindenburg, or in the memoirs of Joffre or Foch. Nor would it be an easy matter to find even in present-day letters of an aged French or German mother to her son such news as Mrs. Mary Turner, of East Hoathly, Essex, sent to her son in September, 1739: "Last Munday youre Father was at Mr. Payns and plaid at Cricket and come home pleased anuf, for he struck the best Ball in the game and wished he had no anny thing else to do he would play Cricket all his Life."[3]

An incident related to sport probably played a curiously significant part in World War history. After the rout of the British in the Ludendorff "peace offensive," further delay in

[1] Cf. Churchill, W., *The World Crisis,* New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929, p. 659.

[2] Maurice, Sir F., Editor, *The Life of General Lord Rawlinson of Trent, From His Journals and Letters,* Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1928, p. 341.

[3] Cardus, N., *op. cit.,* pp. 176 f.

the appointment of an Allied Commander-in-Chief assumed a very grave aspect. Even when the British had resigned themselves to the inevitability of the Generalissimo's being a Frenchman, the problem was far from solved. In the final selection of Foch, the General's military talents and his ability to get along well with the English, already demonstrated under trying circumstances, were potent factors, undoubtedly. But the favorable impression made upon the members of the British War Cabinet by Foch's appreciation of the spirit of boxing probably was not without its influence at the crucial moment. M. Jean Pierrefeu, who was the communiqué editor at the French General Headquarters, has written a war chronicle remarkable for its sincerity and finesse, in which we find the following passage:

> "Foch's military genius seems to be generated by a reflex which is at one and the same time cerebral and muscular. . . . When he translates his conceptions into words, he accompanies them, in fact prefaces them, with gesture. It is well known what definition of victory he gave at the conference of Doullens (at which the choice of the Allied Commander-in-Chief was decided upon) before the representatives of the French and English Governments: 'Victory is like the boxing bag that has to be hammered on with a judicious shower of hits.' Saying this, he boxed the air in front of him. His forceful posture and vehement gestures filled with enthusiasm the representatives of the nation of boxers." [1]

Shaw's Lady Utterword, in *Heartbreak House,* declares that "there are only two classes in good society in England: the equestrian class and the neurotic class"; and she adds, "It isn't

[1] Pierrefeu, J., *G. Q. G.,* Paris, Crès, 1922, t. II, p. 169.

mere convention: everybody can see that the people who hunt are the right people and the people who don't are the wrong ones."[1] This is, of course, a Shavian hyperbole. It remains, however, quite true that, thanks to the practice of sports and games, animated by a peculiar philosophy of sportsmanship, which is sound though not free from exaggeration, England possesses many sons and daughters whose spiritual home is, to borrow from Mr. Stanley Baldwin, the last ditch.[2]

An interesting case of miscarried confidence in the relation of sports to a public man's worth as a statesman concerns Sir Samuel Hoare. On his appointment as Foreign Secretary in October, 1935, the press gave prominence to his record as a sportsman: "A fond sportsman since his school days at Harrow and Oxford, Sir Samuel plays tennis, squash, and cricket and is termed one of the finest amateur ice skaters in all merrie England." It will be remembered that Sir Samuel soon suffered a bad fall on the diplomatic ice for arranging the abortive Laval-Hoare Agreement, under which Italy was to be given two-thirds of Ethiopia, and which led to his resignation from the office.

THE ENGLISHMAN AS THE *HOMO BIOGRAPHICUS*

Being convinced that there is no substitute for good character, the Englishman seeks, instinctively or consciously, to develop his knowledge of men, in particular, men of the caliber of leaders. Even the critical study of the work of a fiction writer is in England very largely the study of the man himself. Relatively infrequent in English literature, rightly observes Professor Wilhelm Dibelius, are novels or plays chiefly con-

[1] Shaw, G. B., *Heartbreak House*, New York, Brentano's, 1919, p. 101.
[2] *The Journal of Education* (London), December, 1933, p. 779.

cerned with ethical, political, or social problems. The Englishman is primarily interested in the story of personalities.[1]

The Englishman is much less concerned with the political, aesthetic, or metaphysical doctrine of a writer than with the man himself, his character, and the way he meets the problems of good and evil in his private and public life. So the Englishman may, indeed, be given the attribute of *homo biographicus;*[2] he is the creature fond of biographical literature, because he is convinced of the importance of the study of character. As a result, an examination of the records of lending libraries in the English countryside reveals that next to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* the most favored volumes are those of the *Dictionary of National Biography.*[3] A brief comparative survey of biographical publications in European countries made by the *Book Review Digest* for 1922-1932 shows that during this decade ninety-one major biographies of statesmen and public men, including eighteen autobiographies, were published in England; while France contributed twenty-six such studies; Germany, sixteen; Austria, thirteen; Russia, thirteen; Italy, six; Belgium, two; Spain, two; Roumania, two. It seems worth mentioning, also, that the Englishman's preferred method of teaching Christianity is the biographical method; while his Continental neighbors expound the Christian doctrine, the Englishman contents himself with teaching the life of Christ and His Apostles, and the traditions of the Church.

The Englishman seems fully to comprehend the public value of records, even though incomplete, of life-histories rich in experience. He well understands that not to record the momentous struggles, victories, and defeats in the life of lead-

[1] Cf. Dibelius, W., *England,* New York, Harper & Brothers, 1930, p. 148.
[2] Cf. Maurois, A., *Aspects of Biography,* New York, D. Appleton and Co., 1929, p. 201.
[3] Cf. Vachell, A. H., *Arising Out of That, cit.,* p. 270.

ing men and women would be national squandering; that to ignore such records when available is to miss a valuable opportunity to increase and improve one's most important equipment for life—the knowledge of men, especially good men. So he thinks, with Macaulay, "No kind of reading is so delightful, so fascinating, as this minute history of a man's self." [1] Hence the wealth of excellent biographical literature in England, generated not so much by mere curiosity or egotistical preoccupation, as by the "attempt to clutch at transitory time before it whirls into oblivion"—writings inspired by the "fond endeavor to retard that hurrying chariot, to grasp the vanishing shadow, and with Faust to cry to the moment: *'Verweile doch, du bist so schön!'* [2] Or if the moment be not fair but grisly, still one would not have it blotted out for ever." [3]

In this connection Professor Dixon pointedly observes:

> "England has been called the chosen home of moral philosophy, and the thought that a work of art may be good artistically and bad morally is foreign, even repugnant to the English mind. Everything seems to us a part of conduct. Many attempts have been made to persuade us to the contrary. Yet from the first our poets have never wavered, one and all—though our more recent writers pour scorn upon such purposes in art—one and all they openly confess their intentions. Spenser's avowed aim in his *Fairie Queene* was 'to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtues and gentle discipline.' 'The principal

[1] Cf. Ponsonby, A., *A Review of English Diaries from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century*, New York, Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1927.

[2] Stay a little longer with me; you are so fair!

[3] Nevinson, H. W., *Changes and Chances*, New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1923, p. vii.

end of poetry,' wrote Ben Jonson, 'is to inform men in the just reason of living.' 'I applied myself,' said Milton, 'not to make verbal curiosity my end . . . but to be an interpreter and revealer of the best and sagest things among my own citizens throughout this island in my mother dialect.' Wordsworth insists, 'I wish to be regarded as a teacher or as nothing.' Shelley declared, indeed, that 'didactic poetry is my abhorrence'; none the less he rivals Wesley in the fervor with which he preaches humanitarian gospel." [1]

In this study our interest in the Englishman's conception of the good man and of good character is primarily relative to the effect of such a concept upon the international "specific gravity" of the English nation. Therefore, it seems of importance to recall that this nation has been eminently successful, on the whole, in selecting for its leaders men and women of good character. The history of modern England is substantially free from the scandal of bribery, high treason, and profligate pleasure-seeking at the expense of the nation, though, not unlike that of other countries, it has sad pages of blundering inefficiency. Even comparatively mild cases of abuse of office, such as the exploitation, for speculative purposes, of the Government's budgetary plans on the part of J. H. Thomas, Colonial Secretary in the Baldwin Cabinet in 1936, are very rare in the conduct of English public affairs.[2] The English

[1] Dixon, W. M., *The Englishman,* New York, Longmans, Green & Co., 1931, pp. 142-143.

[2] Cf. Kuhn, F., "Stolid Baldwin Regains Control," the New York *Times,* Sunday, June 7, 1936:

"The real victims of this unprecedented episode have been the leaders of the Labor Party, for a large section of the voting public has concluded that because Mr. Thomas was a typical workingman, who dropped his H's, no other workingman who drops his aspirates can be trusted in high office. Mr.

public is not only a good judge but also a strict judge of character. The stories of Sir Charles Dilke and the Irish Parnell show that in British politics a public man cannot survive even a social scandal, but, in the picturesque words of Señor Madariaga, is "hounded out of politics," [1] for strictly personal indiscretions.

Finally, the Englishman's earnest admiration of good character, his appreciation of it as the highest human value, is well illustrated by the very careful handling of matters relating to the personal reputation of public men, living or dead. No reflection, however jesting, upon a man's reputation is admissible in English politics, unless it is intended as a direct accusation.[2]

ENGLISH HUMOR

Even in his humor, the Englishman seeks a moral goal. The Englishman's humor seems to serve a twofold aim; it is a safety valve for his control of emotion—a characteristic which will be discussed later in this study—and also a moral lesson, however mellowed by jest, which is significantly aimed at the development of character. This second but not less significant aspect of English humor we shall now consider briefly.

A comparison between English and French humor may be helpful in the analysis of the point in question. French wit is in the nature of intellectual fireworks created by a sudden

Thomas was "not a gentleman"—so what else could you expect of him? Thus runs the argument in thousands of middle-class homes and even in the shabbier suburbs of London, where the mother of a stenographer will not speak to her next door neighbor because she is the mother of a servant girl."

[1] Madariaga, S., *Englishmen, Frenchmen, Spaniards,* New York, Oxford University Press, 1931, p. 164.

[2] Cf. Collier, P., *England and the English from an American Point of View,* New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909, p. 216.

perception of absurdities, miscalculations, and *gaucheries;* English humor, on the other hand, is excellently defined as "thinking in fun while feeling in earnest."[1] French wit amuses and enchants one for a brief moment. English humor, in the words of Max O'Rell, "lightly tickles you under the ribs, and quietly takes possession of you by degrees; the bright idea, instead of being laid bare, is subtly hidden; it is only after you have peeled off the coating of sarcasm lying on the surface, that you get at the fun underneath." English humor calls forth "slow grins and chuckles; it is not something that can be picked up with the language, but something that must be given time to filter through, and thus, while it is everywhere, a traveller in a hurry might well be excused for not noticing it is here at all."[2] French wit is sometimes likened to sparkling champagne, and English humor to ale. "Do you like ale?" asks Taine. "Drink it, your palate will become habituated to it; as a beverage it is wholesome, and, on the whole, strengthening. So is English humour."[3]

ENGLISH POLITICAL MYSTICISM[4]

As stands to reason, no nation has become a world power without subjugating to its own sovereignty, or *imperium* as the Romans called it, some foreign tribes or nations. This expansion of sovereignty by force of arms or equivalent pressure is known as imperialism. Imperialism has, naturally,

[1] Cf. Priestley, J. B., *English Humour,* New York, Longmans, Green & Co., 1929, p. 18.

[2] O'Rell, M. (Blouët, P.), *English Pharisees, French Crocodiles and Other Anglo-French Typical Characters,* Toronto, 1892, p. 88.

[3] Taine, H., *Notes on England,* New York, Henry Holt and Co., 1876, p. 327.

[4] Adapted from our *Shackled Diplomacy: The Permanent Factors of Foreign Policies of Nations,* New York, Barnes & Noble, 1934, Ch. III, "Political Mysticism."

imposed sacrifices, not only upon the intimidated and conquered nations, but also upon the conquerors. Sacrifices in wealth, energy, and human life are usually demanded of its subjects by the nation-aggressor in the name of three actual or supposed imperious necessities: (a) To defend the honor of the nation by avenging insults and humiliations, past or present, actual or imagined; (b) to secure some vital interest of the nation, such as easily defensible or "natural" frontiers, or to insure means of subsistence through the appropriation of arable lands, sources of raw materials, and industrial markets; (c) to bestow upon "barbarous" tribes or nations the peculiarly superior outlook and modes of living which are attributed to itself by the conquering nation, and which are usually referred to pompously but vaguely as *civilization.* Of this blissful civilization the nation-conqueror believes itself the creator and possessor in a peculiar degree, and it believes also that its mission, received from Providence or from "Humanity," is to bring this civilization, by force of arms if necessary, to the nation or nations pronounced "backward" or blind to its benefits, actual or imaginary.

These three predominant factors, which shape the foreign policies of nations—*revanche,* vital interests, and political mysticism—usually function jointly. At certain crises, however, in the preparation, execution, and consolidation of an imperialistic conquest, the factor of political mysticism overshadows the more sordid interests. It is a noble though much abused peculiarity of mankind that the average man of any country whatsoever can be moved more certainly and more deeply by idealistic faith than by merely practical, even imperatively practical, considerations. Disraeli has rightly observed that the world has never been conquered by intrigue, but it has repeatedly been conquered by faith.

The particular trend that this very significant form of faith, political mysticism, takes in a nation intent upon or actually engaged in an imperialistic war, furnishes a valuable aid toward the comprehension of that nation's mind or *ethos.* Nations differ markedly in their political mysticism. Of the three nations with which we are concerned in the present volume, the English, in accordance with the basic trends of the national mind, believe firmly that they have received the mission of bringing to mankind the blessing of orderly civic liberties and of morally and physically sane private life. The French are certain that their mission is to spread clear ideas in the world. The Germans are convinced that they are particularly endowed with the mystic power of hearkening to the inner voice of the true and the truly godly in mankind, and of bringing to mankind the gospel of the mystic message, not less mystically named *Deutschtum,* or pure Germanism.

Postponing a further discussion of French and German political mysticism until later chapters, let us now briefly study English political mysticism, which is so clearly connected with the Englishman's conception of the good man.

Count Sforza, in a paper published in *Foreign Affairs* of October, 1927, refers to "that precious gift bestowed upon the British people—the possession of writers and clergymen able in perfect good faith to advance the highest moral reasons for the most concrete diplomatic action, with inevitable material profit to England." Indeed, the imperialistic action of the English nation, that is the action aimed at dominion over peoples of other races and annexation of their lands, has been spiritually sustained by the chosen-people complex. The belief in England's mystic mission as the bearer of the truly

superior, because truly moral, civilization has been expressed again and again by representative English writers and political leaders.

For instance, in John Lyly's *Euphues and His England,* published in 1581, in the reign of the not too prudish Virgin Queen, one can peruse long pages full of detailed enumeration of the virtues of the English, in distinction from the vices of Italians, Greeks, and Frenchmen. Small wonder, then, that God ordained the War of the Roses to cease before those virtuous persons wholly exterminated one another:

> "But the God who was loath to oppresse England, at last began to represse iniuries, and giue an ende by mercie, to those that could finde no ende of malice, nor looke for any ende of mischiefe. So tender a care hath he alwaies had of that England, as of a new Israel, his chosen and peculier people." [1]

To bring the moral worth of the English into a sharper relief, the novelist makes Euphues, a visiting Greek, first praise "two famous Universities, the one Oxforde, the other Cambridge, both for the profession of all sciences, for Diuinitie, phisiscke, Lawe, and all kind of learning, excelling all the Uniuersities in Christendome." [2] He then proceeds to eulogize the women of England in round terms—". . . this I say, that the Ladyes in England as farre excell all other countries in vertue, as Venus doth all other woemen in beautie. . . ." [3] What is the proof? Here it is. Addressing himself to the women of the Continent, the observant "Greek" makes the following comparisons:

[1] Lyly, John, *Complete Works,* London, Oxford University Press, 1902, Vol. II, p. 205.
[2] *Ibid.,* p. 193.
[3] *Ibid.,* p. 100.

"They in England pray when you play, sowe when you sleep, fast when you feast, and weepe for their sins when you laugh at your sensualitie. They frequent the church to serue God, you to see gallants, they deck them-selues for clenlinesse, you for pride, they maintaine their beautie for their own lyking, you for others lust, they refraine wine bicause they fear to take too much, you bicause you can take no more." [1]

Some four hundred years later, Tennyson expressed the same conviction in his "National Song"; he found "no land like England," no maids so beautiful, no wives so chaste as hers.

Shakespeare's ecstatic hymn to England includes both the island and the race:

"This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise;
This fortress built by nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war,
This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone, set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to house,
Against the envy of less happier lands;
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England. . . ." [2]

Even in the twentieth century few Englishmen would quarrel with Sir Thomas Browne, who asserted in *Christian Morals:* "The true heroick English gentleman hath no peer."

John Milton, to be sure, not without taking certain liberties with history, formulated the chosen-people doctrine. In *Areo-*

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 202.
[2] Shakespeare, *Richard II,* Act ii, sc. 1.

pagitica, a pamphlet addressed to Parliament, is found the following profession of faith in the destinies of England:

"Lords and Commons of England, consider what Nation it is whereof ye are, and whereof ye are the governours: a Nation not slow and dull, but of a quick, ingenious and piercing spirit, acute to invent, suttle and sinewy to discours, not beneath the reach of any point the highest that human capacity can soar to. Therefore the studies of learning in her deepest Sciences have bin so ancient, and so eminent among us, that Writers of good antiquity and ablest judgement have bin perswaded that ev'n the school of Pythagoras and the Persian wisdom took beginning from the old Philosophy of this Iland. And that wise and civill Roman, Julius Agricola, who govern'd once here for Caesar, preferr'd the naturall wits of Britain before the labour'd studies of the French. . . . Yet that which is above all this, the favour and the love of heav'n, we have great argument to think in a peculiar manner propitious and propending towards us. Why else was this Nation chos'n before any other, that out of her as out of Sion should be proclaim'd and sounded forth the first tidings and trumpet of Reformation to all Europ (John Wycliffe)? . . . Now once again by all concurrence of signs and by the generall instinct of holy and devout men, as they daily and solemnly expresse their thoughts, God is decreeing to begin some new and great period in his Church, ev'n to the reforming of Reformation it self. What does he then but reveal Himself to his servants, and as his manner is, first to his English-men; I say as his manner is, first to us, though we mark not the method of his counsels, and are unworthy?"

"Let not England forget her precedence of teaching nations how to live," the great Puritan exhorted in his essay, "Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce." The vulgarized form of this doctrine is the saying, "Doubtless God could have created a greater nation than the English, but he never did."

The mystically idealistic motive, which, together with motives less lofty, stimulated the English in the Napoleonic as well as in subsequent wars, is well expressed by Wordsworth in these lines:

> "We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
> That Shakespeare spake; the faith and morals hold
> Which Milton held.—In everything we are sprung
> Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold."

William Pitt said in a speech at the Lord Mayor's banquet on November 9, 1805: "England has saved herself by her exertions, and will, I trust, save Europe by her example." Accordingly, after the first abdication of Napoleon in 1814, a commemorative medal was struck in England, rather prematurely: *"Se ipsam constantia, Europam examplo."*

Napoleon, according to a modern dramatist, gave a different explanation of the Englishman's motives in foreign policies in the following terse political close-up: "When an Englishman wants a thing, he never tells himself that he wants it. He waits patiently until there comes into his mind, no one knows how, a burning conviction that it is his moral and religious duty to conquer those who have got the thing he wants."[1] These Napoleonic sallies did not even scratch the solid armor of English political mysticism:

> "All the English statesmen have proclaimed this religious mission. Lord Rosebery, a strong Whig, declared

[1] Shaw, B., *Man of Destiny,* New York, Brentano's, 1907, p. 81.

that the British Empire 'is the greatest secular agent of moral progress known in the world.' A Tory, who embodies in all his ideas, in his brusqueness, and even in his corpulence, the traits of the old landed aristocracy, Lord Salisbury, exclaimed: 'The course of events, I would prefer to say the acts of Providence, have called this country to exert a morality and influence on the progress of the world such as an empire has never before exerted.' The same idea was expressed again by the Liberal Gladstone: 'To this great empire Providence has entrusted a mission and a special function.' Likewise the Radical John Morley said, 'The work most useful to humanity has been accomplished by England.'" [1]

An interesting recent instance was furnished by the Washington speech of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, as the Socialist Prime Minister, made in October, 1929, during his political visit to President Hoover. Including the United States, willy-nilly, in a predestined Anglo-American partnership, Mr. MacDonald declared that Providence had entrusted these favored nations with the mission of maintaining peace throughout the world. The declaration provoked the wrath of a Fascist politician, Signor Forges-Davanzati, member of the Grand Fascist Council, who, in an article entitled "The Language of the Kaiser," published by the *Tribuna,* protested against the Scot's "socialistic hypocrisy mingled with the mystic aspiration to world hegemony."

It was the peculiarly English popular form of political mysticism that was responsible for the foundation of the Anglo-Israel Identity Society in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The object of this curious organization was to prove,

[1] Bardoux, J., *Essai d'une psychologie de l'Angleterre contemporaine—Les crises religieuses,* Paris, Félix Alcan, 1906, p. 83.

in good Ethiopian fashion, that the British are descended from the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel and that the English royal line can be traced back to David.

Max O'Rell noted that under the Englishman's missionary garb one can invariably distinguish the hidden armor of a conquistador:

> "He conquers for the world and for the good of the world. When he goes after pastures new, he takes the Bible with him. It will not be very long before the natives have the Bible and he the land. On arriving upon his new field of operation, the missionary places the Bible in the hands of the natives, and thus addresses them: 'My dear Brethren, lift your eyes to heaven, and pray. Lift your eyes—higher—higher—still higher—that is it. Now close them until I tell you—that's it—pray—there—now open your eyes, you are saved.'
>
> "When the worthy natives open their eyes, their territory is gone." [1]

The Anglo-Israel Identity Society had a very different explanation to offer to the English public. Among the proclamations of the Society, whose spokesmen seemed entirely liberated by their political mysticism from all servitude to the historical truth, the following may be cited:

> "Thus do they interpret the verse of Isaiah (LIV): 'Thou shall break forth on the right hand and on the left, and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.'
>
> " 'Whether we desire it or not, we must possess colonies; it is our destiny. The Dutch and the Spaniards have had

[1] O'Rell, M. (Blouët, P.), *op. cit.*, p. 11.

colonies and lost them, almost all; what paltry ones they have must soon cede away from them. The French virtually have none. The Germans have tried and failed, but the British nation has flourishing colonies in all parts of the world, and urgently requires more yet. The Turkish Empire is on the eve of ruin, and as Constantinople will be ours by right, we shall have to take immediate possession of it. Constantinople is the very gate of highway to our largest and best foreign possession—India, with her teeming millions and her forty distinct languages.'

"'The French, the Russians, the Spanish, the Chinese, the Dutch, the Austrians, the Germans, the Indians, and the Italians cannot any of them be Israel, because they have been defeated.'" [1]

"In making the list of victorious campaigns," justly observes Max O'Rell, "you may notice that the Society has prudently omitted to mention that of the Transvaal. The fact of the Boers having given John a sound thrashing would naturally have made it a little less easy to establish its thirty-third proof of identity." [2]

The newer times have made the unqualified doctrine of the chosen people a difficult, in fact, an injudicious creed for the English to admit to their expressions of political mysticism. Accordingly, some two and a half centuries after Milton formulated the chosen-people doctrine, it was reformulated and modernized, to the general satisfaction of "God's own Englishman." Intensifying his possessive complexes, the chosen-people complex furnishes the Englishman with a motive as

[1] Tracts published by the Anglo-Israel Identity Society and quoted by Max O'Rell.

[2] O'Rell, M. (Blouët, P.), *John Bull and His Island,* Charles Scribner's Sons, 1884, p. 230.

valuable as it is powerful for national action in the sphere of international politics. As Count Sforza has pointed out, an eminent modern writer and a distinguished modern clergyman have applied themselves to the task. The writer is Rudyard Kipling and the clergyman, Dean Inge.

"Take up the White Man's burden," Kipling exhorts his fellow-Englishmen, who, incidentally, have been the first western nation to conclude a military alliance with the Japanese.

The clergyman echoes: "Our humanity is shown on a wider scale in the large sums of money which are raised to relieve any special distress in every part of the world. . . . Akin to humanity is an absence of vindictiveness. We have short memories when we have been wronged, and never make long plans for revenge." To fortify his contention with the help of a contrast, Dean Inge, happily blind to four centuries of conquest and misrule, adds a moral lesson for the Irishman, who, it is said, would refuse to go to heaven if St. Peter were an Englishman: "An Englishman is simply unable to comprehend the brooding hatred of the Irishman, which has no better ground than that Cromwell exercised the laws of war somewhat severely against the Irish rebels, and that William III won the battle of Boyne."[1] Perhaps one may be pardoned here for recalling the popular slogan: "The Englishman's patience is long as the summer day, but the Englishman's arm is long as the winter night."

The spirit that animated Admiral Wemyss was precisely that of Kipling and Dean Inge, when the Admiral wrote to his wife on August 9, 1914, from a station in the Channel patrol:

> "Oh, what a chance we may yet have if we are strong enough at the end of the war to put matters straight in

[1] *England*, London, Ernest Benn, 1933, pp. 53 f.

Europe. England should be, and may be, if only we go to work properly, the arbiter in the end, and pray God, if it comes to that, we may be a just one. I am beginning to have faith in our country once more, and that faith produces hope. I believe that now (whatever we may have been in the past) we are the only country which seeks neither aggrandizement for ourselves nor humiliation for our enemy, and that is the only way in which permanent peace lies. After this we must have peace, and such a peace which cannot be broken for motives other than honour." [1]

Whatever an impartial student of recent diplomatic history may know and say about Great Britain's multiple motives for participation in the World War and about her varied actions at the Peace Conference, the average Englishman, who did his heavy share in bringing the war to a successful end, is convinced that his country was merely answering the call received from Providence and from mankind to defend justice and protect freedom against the treacherous Hun. Many Englishmen are profoundly disappointed with the way affairs, national and international, went after the World War. Yet England's political mysticism remains in force; at all events it is stronger than post-war pessimism. In J. B. Priestley's *English Journey* we find a reflection which well illustrates this state of mind:

"If we are a nation of shopkeepers, then what a shop! . . . We stagger under our inheritance. But let us burn every book, tear down every memorial, turn every cathedral and college into an engineering shop, rather than grow cold and petrify, rather than forget that inner glow-

[1] Wemyss, Lady W., *The Life and Letters of Lord Wester Wemyss, Admiral of the Fleet,* London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1935, p. 168.

ing tradition of the English spirit. . . . We headed the procession when it took what we see now to be the wrong turning, down into the dark bog of greedy individualism, where money and machine are of more importance than men and women. It is for us to find the way out again, into the sunlight. We may have to risk a great deal, perhaps our very existence. But rather than live on meanly and savagely, I concluded, it would be better to perish as the last of the civilized peoples." [1]

In the meantime, the Englishman must carry out his not unprofitable mission, defined with engaging awkwardness by H. G. Wells's Oswald Sydenham:

"'That sort of thing,' he said, 'is what we Englishmen are for, you know, Peter. What our sort of Englishmen is for anyhow. We have to go about the world and make roads and keep the peace and see fair play. We've got to kill big beasts and climb mountains. That's the job of the Englishman. He's a sort of policeman. A sort of working guardian. Not a nosy slave-driver trying to get rich. He chases off slave-drivers. All the world's his beat. India, Africa, China, and the East, all the seas of the world. This little fat green country, all trim and tidy and set with houses and gardens, isn't much of a land for a man, you know—unless he is an invalid. It's a good land to grow up in and come back to die in. Or rest in. But in between, no!'" [2]

[1] New York, Harper & Brothers, 1934, p. 417.
[2] *Joan and Peter,* New York, The Macmillan Company, 1918, p. 303.

THE IDEAL OF THE GENTLEMAN

One aspect of the "good man," and perhaps the most inclusive, is the ideal gentleman. The concept "gentleman" has undergone in the course of English social and political history some important modifications.[1] The origin of the term is the Latin word *gentilis,* which originally meant a person belonging to a *gens,* that is, to a definite tribe. This adjective denoted, however, something more than mere ethnological relationships. In the time of the migration of peoples it was a distinction, even more than in our time, to have an address, so to speak. Then *gentilis* meant precisely a person with an address, as opposed to a person without one, that is, a person of unknown tribal origin. Thus *gentilis* gradually came to mean persons belonging to the upper class, whose wealth and social position provided them with an historic address—in other words, persons in possession of charters recording their titles to property, authority, and honors, no matter how acquired. In the early Middle Ages, "gentleman" was an inclusive term, nation-wide in application; it comprised all the members of a given tribe, or all its "nationals." Next, with the growth of feudalism, "gentleman" became a selective term and suffered considerable restriction in meaning. It denoted persons belonging to the upper class, persons possessing wealth, power, and titles of nobility.

Then came the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution, which not only created the abject lower class of an industrial proletariat, but also forced the land-owning upper class to yield the major part of its political and social power to the rising upper middle class of factory owners, merchants, and

[1] Cf. Hoyler, A., *Gentleman-Ideal und Gentleman-Erziehung,* Leipzig, Felix Meiner Verlag, 1933.

bankers. The Industrial Revolution extended the meaning of the term "gentleman" to include men of wealth, who had no claim to "historic addresses." In other words, the term came to include the *nouveaux riches,* whose importance could not safely be ignored by the then ruling class of the hereditary aristocracy.

The gradual democratization of the fundamental political institutions in England has been accompanied by an inevitable extension of the concept "gentleman." It is at present almost as all-inclusive as it was at the time when the term *gentilis* was of tribal scope. This downward extension of the use and interpretation of the concept "gentleman" shocks many Englishmen of the old school. "Nowadays," complains Mr. H. W. Nevinson, "the word 'gentlemen' is painted on lavatory doors, and the half-educated call each other gentlemen, when others would use the word 'man' or 'fellow.'" [1] He does not seem to be justified, however, in the fear "of the decline already threatening" in Tennyson's praise of his departed friend:

"And thus he bore without abuse
The grand old name of Gentleman,
Defamed by every charlatan,
And soil'd with all ignoble use." [2]

The all-inclusive generosity with which the term "gentleman" is used in common parlance is only apparent and not real. In reality the term is still selective in its application, though the basis of selection is no longer exclusively that of pedigree or wealth. Some fifty years ago, Hippolyte Taine already noted that people, when speaking to him of this great

[1] Nevinson, H. W., *Rough Islanders,* London, George Routledge and Sons, 1930, p. 55.
[2] *In Memoriam:* CXI (1850).

lord, or that diplomatist, would say, "He is no gentleman."[1] The downward extension of the term has certainly not made it lax, nebulous, or meaningless. In the course of time, as is natural, the ideal of the gentleman has become a curious amalgamation of the chivalric-aristocratic concept of knight-errantry with the Puritan middle-class concept of the good man.

In the confusion of the Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth century, some of the *nouveaux riches* who pretended to the distinction of gentlemen furnished rich material for satirical essays by copying the landed gentry's external modes of living, such as the late dinner, suburban residence, employment of men-servants, and the like.[2] External qualifications, as the criteria of one's eligibility for the distinction of gentleman, have, on the whole, become a matter of the past. It is as if the English came, instinctively, to understand that the formidable power of mechanics ushered in by the Industrial Revolution must be tempered by a kind of social mysticism, lest that power, while contributing to material civilization, destroy the spiritual values upon which all civilization is based. Leaders of English thought have traditionally understood, either rationally or instinctively, that moral civilization, which is the most valuable aspect of human progress, is, basically, of a mystical nature; that it depends for its existence and functioning on the individual's belief that there are values superior to the value of the individual's pleasure and success—indeed, of his very life.

Doubtless, the accidents of "good" birth, social position, wealth, and smartness are, in the eyes of many an English-

[1] *Notes on England, cit.*, p. 175.
[2] Cf. Dibelius, W., *England, cit.*, pp. 164 ff.

man, essential to the dignity of a gentleman. The tendency of some such Englishmen "to draw this distinction is as keen—and perhaps as instinctive—as that of the old-time Southern negro to differentiate between 'quality' and 'po' whites.'"[1] But these criteria cannot be called determinant; they are all accidental. The rank of gentleman must be won by each man for himself.

The ideal gentleman of present-day England, or rather of that not insignificant portion of the English who worry themselves about such matters, is very close to the old Roman ideal of *pietas*. This concept embraced not merely religious and filial piety, but, in general, respect for the superior permanent moral values. Thus "gentleman" in England means a person possessed of the conviction of the unchanging value of certain moral dicta and certain patterns and ideals of living. As a "duty to himself," the English gentleman observes the rules of the game, even when his conduct is not observed.[2] The externals such as one's bearing and manners, weight the scales only in so far as they reveal, however fleetingly, a superior and accepted scale of values, solid moral convictions, and a code of honor based on these fundamentals. If the word "convictions" should sound presumptuous in our skeptical era of mere opinions, then it may be said that a gentleman is a person of *good taste* in matters of conduct, a person who can sav of himself in

[1] Scarborough, H. E., *op. cit.*, p. 30.

[2] Cf. the following story told by M. René Puaux in the *Neue Freie Presse*, June 28, 1936: "I once came across a high British official in a lonely outpost on the upper course of the Nile. He was the only white man within a radius of 125 miles. He shaved every morning and donned a dinner-jacket for his lonely dinner every evening. It was a case of doing his duty to himself, he explained to me, a sort of ethical self-discipline. Later in the evening, when he was having his glass of whiskey on the veranda of his bungalow under the starlit sky, he did not pretend to meditate over philosophical problems. He was conscious of being an English gentleman and this was enough for him."

the words of Anatole France: "I understand all, but there are things which are disgusting to me." [1]

The gentleman's code of conduct is, then, in the last analysis, a loyal and voluntary conformity to certain customs and institutions of the country, which are regarded as fundamental and opposition to which is considered bad taste—the avoidance of that which is "not done," and if done, would cost one his caste of gentleman. Such is the established code, despite the fact that some English gentlemen may pretend, out of intellectual coquetry perhaps, that they are through-and-through individualists and non-conformists. The reverent attitude toward what the ancient Romans called *mos maiorum,* the ways of the ancestors, tradition, also seems to be a basic element. A gentleman is one who may finish by conceding, after careful consideration, the necessity of changing a tradition, but would never begin by wantonly discarding one. There is a price to pay for this ideal of the gentleman, the thing being well worth the price, to be sure; the price is the narrowing, tedium-producing effect of conformity.

Among the qualifications of a gentleman, patriotism should be named next. A true gentleman must be prepared to yield private interests, in time of crisis, to the country's collective good; he must, further, have a proud and pious affection for England, and a sort of mystic attachment to the English soil, a sentiment similar to that expressed by Wordsworth in his *Poems Dedicated to National Independence and Liberty:*

> "Thou art free,
> My country! and 'tis joy enough and pride
> For one hour's perfect bliss, to tread the grass
> Of England once again."

[1] *Histoire comique,* Paris, Calmann-Lévy, p. 9.

Another important trait of the gentleman is his horror of flippant agnosticism and, still more, of outspoken atheism. Certainly, in England, as elsewhere, religion has suffered from the temporary, and not unarrogant, triumph of the natural sciences over metaphysics. On the other hand, while people are gradually discovering for themselves the impotence of science as a substitute for religion—as the philosophy of life—and while they are finding out that, in Lord Balfour's words, it is more difficult to view the universe without the Creator than with Him, the ground is preserved on which the regeneration of religion can and will be made. This ground consists of a respectful attitude toward established *mores*. Even the most convinced agnostics must practice such an attitude, if they aspire to the distinction of gentlemen. Agnosticism and atheism must keep within the bounds of discreet discussion. No gentleman would permit himself flippantly or bombastically to attack religion before those whose limited education or immaturity might expose their simple faith to the danger of being overpowered by scientific theory. It will not do, either, to profess hedonistic appetites. England subjects to serious modification Voltaire's rule that "all styles are good which are not tiresome."

Among the implied and subsidiary articles of the gentleman's code of honor the following may be mentioned:

> "A gentleman, we think, should not advertise, or be pushing, assertive, forensic, histrionic. He should have little to say of himself, should consume his own smoke and refrain from boring his neighbours or forcing their attention either upon his own happiness or his own troubles. He claims no superiority. The discovery of his merits he leaves to his fellows. Of impudence and imper-

tinence he has a horror. Both meanness and ostentation are foreign to his nature. Obliging but not effusive, reserved rather than expansive, he is careful to avoid wounding the susceptibilities of others, and would rather suffer an injury than inflict one. If he is not a hero, and a hero he need not to be, he will never be a coward. He has at least too much respect for himself to run away. He may shudder at danger, but he will go to the rescue. . . . Add to this a courteous attitude to human beings in general, and to women in particular, of whom he takes the chivalric rather than the realistic view, and we have some of the components of this ideal conception. . . . He must have refinement if not intellectual attainments, courtesy if not fortune, manners if not birth. There are certain things impossible to him, cruelty, inhumanity, taking advantage of the weakness or folly of others, acting a part, striking attitudes. His manner to his inferiors is indistinguishable from his manners to his superiors. . . . A certain easiness of demeanor belongs to him, a sort of negligence which declines to exaggerate the importance of anything to the point of excitement, irritation or fury about it, and thus excludes fanaticism, murders, revenges." [1]

A student of comparative national psychology aptly summarized the English ideal of the gentleman as follows:

"One may be born rich or noble, but one is not born a gentleman. . . .

"The gentleman recalls the sage of the Stoics, the type of that which one ought to be. It is better if he has means

[1] Dixon, W. M., *The Englishman*, New York, Longmans, Green & Co., 1931, pp. 84 f.

and is well-born, but this is not absolutely indispensable; it is difficult but not impossible for him to be a merchant or a manufacturer. If he has to earn his living, he must maintain his pride, his reserve, his superiority to fortune and circumstances and present his bills, like an artist or a physician, with a sort of haughty modesty, counting on the delicacy of other people, never confessing his troubles, his needs or anxieties, or anything that would make him inferior to those whose esteem he claims and whose commiseration he rejects. The true gentleman is, or should appear to be, above any constraint; he has no master, and he acts only from condescension or a sense of duty. No man can command him in any way, and, when he obeys, he obeys an impersonal law, or a promise that he has given, or a contract he has accepted; in short, he obeys only himself, only what he recognizes as just and equitable and not any despotism whatever.—'Dieu et mon droit' is his motto. The gentleman is decidedly the free man, the man who is stronger than things and who feels that personality surpasses all the accessory attributes of fortune, health, rank, power, etc., and is the essential fact, the intrinsic and real worth of the individual. . . . The gentleman is the man who is master of himself, who respects himself and makes himself respected. His essential trait is therefore inner sovereignty. He is a self-possessed character, a force that governs himself, a free agent who affirms himself and manifests and rules himself by the standards of dignity. This ideal is therefore very close to the Roman type of the *Ingenuus consciens et compos sui* and of the *dignitas cum auctoritate*. This ideal is more moral than intellectual. It is suitable to England, whose special trait is will. But from self-respect

a thousand things derive, such as the care of one's person, of one's language and manner, vigilance over body and soul, control of one's instincts and one's passions, the desire to be self-sufficient, the pride that neither exacts nor wishes favours, the care not to expose oneself to any humiliation or any mortification, by avoiding the least dependence on human caprice, the constant preservation of one's honour and one's self-esteem: altogether the English type of the sage. This sovereignty not being easy for any but the man who is well-born, well-bred and rich, was at first identified with birth, rank, and especially property. The idea of the gentleman thus derives from feudalism; it is a mollification of seigniory." [1]

It may be said in general that one requirement which the Englishman must satisfy in order to be classified as a gentleman is earnestness of purpose in speech and in deed. It is in England that the echo of the celebrated Roman *gravitas* seems to be best preserved. The English code of good conduct, while encouraging reasonable gaiety and humor, frowns at anything that might look like trifling with the *sacra,* the fundamental institutions, beliefs, and customs consecrated by long usage. The Englishman abhors anything that smacks of nihilism, even when the latter is practiced as a pastime, as an intellectual sport. There are, to the Englishman, certain things about which he does not want to be clever, to make jokes himself, or to hear jokes, even very brilliant ones, made by others.

To appreciate this interesting and very English characteristic, intellectual "gravity," it may be useful to glance at some

[1] From *The Private Journal of Henri F. Amiel,* edited by Van Wyck Brooks and Charles Van Wyck, New York, 1935, pp. 213 ff. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

recent intellectual movements in England. The history of these movements seems to show that even the more radically minded English intellectuals are reluctant to trifle with the real fundamentals of English life, as they are shy of recommending that even their own theories be carried out to their logical conclusion. They prefer a compromise, which would spare as much of the past as possible, as did John Wycliffe, one of the earliest English radicals:

> "He was no less of a revolutionary in political than in religious doctrine. Not only did he denounce the anomaly of a wealthy priesthood, but he arraigned the whole institution of property as inconsistent with the preaching and practice of Him who had not where to lay His head, and whose followers brought their goods to a common stock. Wycliffe, however, was no Tolstoi, to follow such principles to their logical conclusion, and the practical consequences of his theory evidently frightened the Master of Balliol and Rector of Lutterworth. So, like the practical Englishman he was at heart, he got out of the difficulty by a subterfuge which, though it had been employed by all trimmers since the world began, has never, except by Wycliffe, been frankly formulated. 'God,' he says, 'must serve the Devil,' much as Wycliffe himself served that arch-intriguer, John of Gaunt, even to the extent of apologizing for his patron's murder of a man in a church where he had taken sanctuary. It is not necessary to follow Wycliffe further through the windings from which he manages to escape from communistic idealism to a comfortable acceptance of things as they are." [1]

[1] Wingfield-Stratford, E., *The History of British Civilization,* New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1930, p. 262.

At the turn of the century, three intellectuals of fairly moderate views were vying for leadership. They were George Meredith, H. G. Wells, and Bernard Shaw. Helped by Swinburne's "school of the flesh" and the "esthetes" of the school of Oscar Wilde and D. G. Rossetti, who both preached "freedom from the seven deadly virtues," these brilliant intellectuals, to borrow from the picturesque phrasing of Professor Cazamian, directed their criticism at the very "pillars, immutable and naked, constituted by the beliefs, sentiments, and prejudices of John Bull. . . . These critics, through their mercilessly acid animadversions, aimed not only at the radical change of the external institutional bases of English life, but also at its persistent foundations, the national character or psychology. Family, marriage, patriotism, religion, and the gentleman's code of morals were subjected, together with property rights, to clever and acid mirth."[1] Essays, novels, plays poured forth, attacking all the traditional orthodoxies. The formation of an English "bohemia *à la française*" was hailed, prematurely, by the Continental *bohème*. The labors of a young man from Dublin, Mr. Bernard Shaw, were especially ardent and well pointed, and he soon became one of the leading lights of a socialistic group, composed chiefly of the radically inclined "suburbans,"[2] that is, the middle-class "intelligentsia."

The radical movement in England at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century convinced more than one foreign observer that deep cracks were opening in the impressive front of England's political stability and of

[1] Cazamian, L., *L'Angleterre moderne: son évolution*, Paris, Flammarion, 1916, pp. 294 ff.

[2] Cf. Masterman, C. F. G., *The Condition of England, cit.*, pp. 68 ff.

her solid *mores*. Skepticism, search for pleasure, pursuit of lines of least resistance and similar rifts, which foreign observers, and not unfriendly ones, thought they could see in the armor of English *mores,* led them to ask the question, whether England were not entering upon a new period of history—the period of fatal decline. This question has been answered with unmistakable clarity by the conduct of England during the World War and its aftermath. During this era, when several empires fell, and when England's friends as well as her enemies passed through the convulsions of readjustment, and in some cases through the pangs of open revolution, England continued her steady course of adaptation and remained practically free from all foundation-shaking concussions.

What interests us, however, in particular at this step of our study, is the fate which the intransigent rationalism of the school of Meredith, Wells, and Shaw met at the hands of the English reading public. The influence of these critics remained very limited. The "gravity," characteristic of the English, made it impossible to create even among the intellectuals a movement comparable to that created at the same time in Russia by the gentle, visionary Tolstoists, the coarse "proletarian" realists of the school of Gorky, by the polished skeptics, the mystic pessimists, or proud sensualists of the school of Chekhov, Andreyev, and Artzybashev. The case of Mr. Shaw is particularly instructive and revealing. A man of many talents, he lacked, in an extraordinary degree, the qualities demanded by the Englishman of the gentleman—in particular the restraint and "gravity," as defined above. And the result is the practically complete failure of his crusade against orthodoxies. In the words of Professor Wingfield-Stratford:

"Mr. Shaw was an ardent and entirely sincere believer in his message, but so anxious was he to get it before the public that he shrank from no means of booming it, and, in consequence, missed his desired end altogether, being reverently invested, in lieu of the prophet's robe, with the cap and bells of a licensed Merry Andrew. By dashing on to paper any epigram or argument calculated to raise a laugh or an eyebrow, he undoubtedly won his way to European fame, he found scope and audience for his dramatic genius, he exercised a destructive influence comparable to that of Voltaire, but when he turned to the most important part of his work, the reconstruction of faith and society—he was as one that mocked." [1]

Long, arduous, and dangerous wars always produce in the belligerent countries a reappraisal of values and an earnest desire for reform, as well as selfish moods of libertinism. This has occurred after all important wars of recorded history, beginning with the Greco-Persian conflict; and this is exactly what happened in England, among the other belligerent countries, as a result of the World War and its aftermath. A renewed wave of earnest criticism and of sheer licentiousness as well came upon England. The strength of this new fermentation equaled, if not surpassed, that which had occurred at the turn of the century. But, again, its menace was rapidly counteracted by the strength of English "gravity," manifested not only by the middle class but also by influential intellectuals themselves, the very proponents of the new ways of living. To be sure, time has changed the modes of living even in England, but the change is less deep-going than in other western lands. England is today, as it was three hundred years

[1] *The History of British Civilization,* New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1930, pp. 1144 f.

ago, at the time of the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), more puritanic and possessed of more "gravity" than any other contemporary western land.

Certainly, there are writers in England, who, in their theory of "free flesh," of "natural life," far overstep the boundaries set for such matters by the English sense of "gravity." The average English reader, however, finds the school of James Joyce unbearably "cloacal"—the expression used by H. G. Wells, himself a prophet of the new day and one who is free from all dyed-in-the-wool prudishness. But then, again, the outstanding post-war apostles of new ways show themselves, upon a closer examination, quite moderate and possessed of "gravity," and of a good dose of Wycliffean prudence.

In general, the English have suffered through the World War derangement many casualties, political and moral, as have other nations. But these casualties were not numerous enough to create a general confusion. While some young people have, like the dog in a recent fable,[1] eaten their labels and lost all sense of direction, their number is not enough seriously to deflect traffic from the tried and traditional lines. And that this should be so is, in large part, due to the "gravity" of the best of the contemporary English prophets of "a new life," who have turned their backs on nihilistic and revolutionary frolics.

Mr. Alec Waugh, of Soho, is a typical case in point. Do you remember the passage in *Myself When Young,* describing a studio party given by an obscure musician who "was celebrating his wife's elopement"?

> "The atmosphere was thick. The floor was covered with cigarette ends and the splinters of broken glass. In

[1] Vachell, A. H., *Arising, cit.,* p. 291.

various corners of the room partially inebriated couples were lost to the world in amorous abandon. An unwashed, unshaven Italian was strumming on a fiddle. There was a little dancing. A number of loose-collared Americans were talking in art jargon at the top of their voices. In a deep armchair, his nose broken, his forehead and eyebrows cut and swollen, a man slept. Whether he had disputed a brother artist's claim to lady's favour, or whether his legs had been unequal to their task and he had collapsed upon a broken bottle, I was unable to discover. At any rate, he slept. He was a loathsome sight. But I was impressed. I was just free from the shackles of military discipline and etiquette. Here, I thought, was life. Here was a society that had won to freedom, that was divorced from all preconceived opinions, from every superimposed tradition of taste and conduct. It was, indeed, somewhat a shock to me that the only man in the room who appeared to possess a razor should say in a very dry voice, 'What a show. Look at all these idiots pretending to be Dostoieffskies.'"[1]

An interesting, though indirect, witness to the reaffirmation of the traditional ideal of the gentleman and of conservatism among the thinking young people in England is to be found in a communistic study of the British "intelligentsia." The communistic writer sees, of course, in this return to soundness and equilibrium a new expression of the horrible depravity of capitalism:

"After the war, when conversions to catholicism grew more frequent, it was the yearning for discipline, for

[1] *Myself When Young,* New York, Brentano's, 1924, pp. 211-212; published by Coward-McCann.

authority, for a complete conception of life, which provided the chief motive. Intellectuals laid waste by the crisis of capitalism passed through a phase of turning inwards, of desire to live by their own inward values, and so came to feeling the burden of their loneliness, their lack of a great mother to whom to confess. They grew thirsty for an outward authority which might save them from that wild search for peace and from that awful hopeless isolation. And as the crisis deepened we have been able to witness how this purely subjective psychological attraction to authority gradually merged into the direct fascination of the bourgeois intelligentsia and the growing sense of discipline to their class." [1]

While there are in England, and of course will always be, individuals and groups who profess and even practice pessimism, relativism, and skepticism intermingled with sensualism, yet in all probability they are a smaller fraction of the population than in other lands. Such groups are found, for instance, among the university youth, perhaps largely members of land-owning families whose economic situation has been seriously undermined by the post-war fiscal policies, in particular under the Labour cabinets. Alan Johnson's symposium of the outlook of British youth [2] is a mournful as well as truthful echo of the moods of those young people who "deny universal beliefs," are not "serious or earnest, but cynical and disillusioned"; whose attitude is "one of sheer hopelessness, of conviction of the futility of action, of all attempts to set the world right." Some individuals respond only too eagerly to the advice "to live with the whole of our bodies, not

[1] Mirsky, D., *The Intelligentsia of Great Britain,* New York, Covici Friede, 1935, p. 160.
[2] *Growing Opinions,* London, Methuen & Co., 1935.

only with our heads." There are found in England "rootless intellectuals . . . terribly knowing and disillusioned and conscientiously indecent," who take nothing for granted except "their surpassing intelligence" [1]—"exotic individuals," as the Archbishop of Canterbury characterized them in his criticism of the former King Edward VIII's associates. This tendency is, however, more than offset by the healthy and optimistic trends among the youth of the day. A great many of these seem inclined to accept such appeals as that made by C. E. M. Joad, in *The Future of Morals,* "to take once more the gods of our grandfathers from the shelves on which our fathers have placed them—the gods of simplicity and earnestness, of authority and leadership; even it would seem of faith." It is precisely in the realm of faith that refreshing signs of liquidation of the post-war vogue of exaggerated relativism, skepticism, and egotistical hedonism are forthcoming. The Oxford Movement, infused with religious ardor and loyalty to the fundamental unchanging moral values of life, and also the tangible revival of Catholicism bear witness to this new trend of thought in England.

As Paul von Meissner writes in a penetrating survey of these intellectual and moral developments in post-war England:

> "The English public is tired of experiments, in the success of which it does not any longer believe. Prudence makes its voice strong again; the old forces which have several times in the course of history stood England in good stead are brought forth once more. The goal is, to be sure, still distant, and the *Britannia felix* of the good old days is still more a wish than a reality. It is, however, not to be doubted that the will to terminate the crisis of

[1] Buchan, J., *The Man from the Norlands, cit.,* p. 119.

pessimism has already lent to English life an unusually stimulating impetus." [1]

Mr. John Macmurray's explanation of the failure of communism to take foothold in England also seems to merit quotation:

"It is the religious character of the English values which explains the failure of communistic theory to make much impression upon the British working classes. They tend to judge religiously, that is to say, in terms of direct relation between man and man. When the communistic agitator seeks to increase the sentiment of class antagonism between the worker and the employer by describing the wickedness of the capitalist exploiter, he is faced with people whose natural reaction is to say: 'We know the people you are talking about, and they are not like that.' The British working class is thoroughly sensitive to the injustices of the system of exploitation under which it lives. But it is also highly sensitive to the great amount of good-will and kindness that is to be found in its relations with those human beings who happen to be capitalists, often through no fault of their own. It is the fundamental importance of those personal, or rather inter-personal, values for the English which offers such a stubborn resistance to the effort to inculcate a theory, based upon purely economic interests, which ignores them. Consequently, the Labour Party and the various socialist parties of this country are little touched by its pure economic theories of Marxism." [2]

[1] "Das geistige England der Gegenwart," *Die neueren Sprachen*, 1936, Heft 6, SS. 241-260, esp. S. 241.

[2] Macmurray, J., *Creative Society, A Study of the Relation of Christianity to Communism*, New York, Association Press, 1936, pp. 167 f.

FAIR PLAY AND THE DOUBLE STANDARD OF JUDGMENT

There are two attributes of good character which the average Englishman is inclined to think his nation possesses in a degree almost equal to monopoly. These attributes are fair play and stamina. As we shall have occasion to discuss the stamina in our study of education for leadership, we now confine ourselves to fair play, which the English would persuade the world is pre-eminently an English quality.

It is doubtful whether commercial competition in England is any more tender-hearted or gentle than in any other country, but in matters of national politics and in the inevitable political competition, the English have developed an admirable code of fair play. Dictators are amazed each time that honors for members of the Opposition are recommended in England by the party in power. While in England leaders of the Opposition are raised to knighthood, in countries ruled by dictators they are flung into concentration camps, or "liquidated." This very English way of "playing the game," a remarkably sound and fertile custom productive of political stability and social peace, is a constant lesson, not only to dictators but also to democratic and parliamentary governments in foreign countries.

Social justice toward the underprivileged has shown, since the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, when laws relative to social insurance were enacted in England, evidence of superior, though still imperfect, political thinking and economic organization. With regard to the administration of legal justice, though England is of course not entirely free from unjust judges and bad laws, English jurisprudence has made for itself a well-deserved reputation for incorruptibil-

ity and uprightness. Napoleon could not have paid England a higher compliment than he did when after his second abdication he sought to put himself under the protective hand of the English law. Before surrendering to the English and boarding the *Bellerophon,* he wrote the following letter to the Prince Regent:

"YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS:

"Being prosecuted by the factions which tear asunder my country and by the animosity of the greatest European Powers, I have ended my political career and, like a new Themistocles, I am going to seek a place by the fire-side of the English nation. I am putting myself under the protection of the laws of England, for which protection I beseech my strongest and most constant but also my most generous enemy.

Island of Aix, July 13, 1815,
(Signed) NAPOLEON." [1]

While held for some time at Plymouth on board the English man-of-war which was to carry him to Saint Helena, the deposed emperor sought by many subterfuges to obtain permission to go ashore. He had been advised by his lawyer that once on English soil he was subject to English law and could claim its protection; a court would order his captors to show on what count he could be made prisoner and sent to Saint Helena. Thus the immeasurably ambitious Corsican of genius, who more than once during his astounding career had ruthlessly flouted all laws, divine and human, sought the protection of English justice when the game was lost.[2]

[1] Aubry, O., "Vers Sainte-Hélène," *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 15 décembre 1933, p. 843.
[2] *Op. cit., Revue des Deux Mondes,* 1er janvier 1934, p. 110.

These English forms of fair play, social justice, and dependable legal justice came into being as a result of a long and laborious process of social struggle and adjustment. When the English of today haughtily compare their customs of fair-mindedness and fair play with "oriental" treacheries and cruelties, they conveniently forget their own history or are ignorant of it. The truth of the matter is that less than one hundred years ago the social history of England was scarcely less stained with innocent blood than was that of many other countries. The "fair land of England" was anything but fair to not a few of her sons. To many of them, she was, in the words of Carlyle, "torpid, gluttonous, sooty, swollen, and squalid England," given up to "deaf stupidities." [1] To the children in the factories and to the pauperized laborers in the villages it was, as Matthew Arnold notes, a "brazen prison." [2]

Professor F. A. Ogg summarizes the situation of the "lower" classes at the time of the Industrial Revolution as follows:

> "In 1802 Sir Robert Peel directed the attention of Parliament to an abuse which was perhaps the grossest of the day, *i.e.*, the miserable condition of apprentices in cotton mills. . . . In their anxiety to relieve the ratepayers the authorities of the parishes, it developed, were accustomed to dispose of pauper children as apprentices, transporting them to the mills, where, while nominally learning a trade, they were reduced to veritable slavery. Men made a business of procuring and supplying apprentices, bringing together groups of workhouse children from neighboring parishes and conveying them by wagons or canal boats

[1] Quoted in Masterman, C. F. G., *op. cit.*, p. 6.
[2] *Ibid.*

to factory districts where they were likely to be in demand, and subsequently disposing of them on the best terms possible to factory owners in need of 'hands.' Apprentices were lodged and fed, under conditions that were execrable, in cheap houses adjoining the factories; they were placed in charge of overseers whose pay was dependent upon the amount of work they could compel to be accomplished; they were flogged, fettered, and tortured, and in general subjected to repression and cruelty." [1]

Professor Wingfield-Stratford, a British historian, describes as follows the "fair play" on the part of the ruling classes in England, who "having eyes saw not and having hearts felt not":

"Even in the best times the lot of those who were hired to tend the machines was grim enough. There is no need to detail here the oft-told story of the horrors of mine and factory life. Owing to the frantic increase of population, which was doubled in less than three generations, and the influx of multitudes of Irish peasants, who could work and live for next to nothing, the labour market was nearly always glutted, and until 1825 the men were not even allowed to combine to obtain decent terms. As in the country, the workers were forced down to a subsistence level of wages which itself was continually being depressed. The hours they laboured were too long and the nourishment they obtained usually too small to support a normal existence. In the cotton trade it was said that a spinner seldom survived the age of forty. The generations were cut short before their time, and it was perhaps better to

[1] From *Economic Development of Modern Europe,* by F. A. Ogg, New York, 1917, p. 373. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

die early than to eke out an existence in which such physical hardship was aggravated by a slavish discipline, and in which even the miserable pittance was cut down by constant arbitrary fines.

"Grimmest of all was the lot of children who were herded into the factories almost as soon as they could walk, whose hours were from five in the morning till seven or nine at night, in a steaming and overheated atmosphere and amid unfenced machinery into which the poor little victims often dropped through sheer exhaustion, or imprisoned alone and in the dark down in the bowels of the earth. Every species of cruelty had to be practised to keep them up to the mark; the employer would often wait with a horsewhip in the small hours of the morning to flog the half drowsed infants into their daily Hell, and as the day went on and agonized appeals for the time were heard, conscientious foremen would apply the scourge with ever more industrious assiduity until the bruised and haggard little boys and girls reeled home for a few hours' insufficient sleep, broken by dreams of the day's torture. The parents, where they were not brutalized by their own misery out of all natural feeling, watched with bleeding hearts the sacrifice of their children, but the industrial Moloch was inexorable, it was a choice between Hell and starvation—conscientious overseers would not grant relief to idle hands, however diminutive." [1]

It is also true that the English, while professing the tenderest interest in animals of all sorts, have made the slaughter of game for sport a fashionable pastime. Similarly, humane,

[1] Wingfield-Stratford, E., *The History of British Civilization*, New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1930, pp. 888 f.

though never "soft," treatment of persons accused of crime has not always been the happy tradition of English jurisprudence. In the centuries not so distantly past, English courts, as any one can gather from a grim display of execution bills in the basement of the London Museum and from a visit to the Bloody Tower, employed means of correction which might put to shame "oriental" specialists in torture. In the words of Sir Basil Thomson:

> "At the opening of the nineteenth century a hundred and sixty offences were recognized as punishable with death. . . . It is difficult to realize that in the lifetime of our grandparents a man might be hanged if he appeared in disguise in a public road; if he cut down young trees; if he shot rabbits; if he poached game at night; if he returned to England from transportation before the end of his sentence; if, being a gypsy, he remained in the same place for twelve months. It was even a capital offence to break down the embankment of a fishpond and let the fish escape; to cut down a fruit tree in a garden or orchard; to steal a handkerchief of above the value of one shilling from another man's pocket." [1]

All this does not, however, invalidate the fact that in recent times England has developed, with relation to inevitable political and economic conflicts within the nation, a greater degree of fair play than any other country of western civilization. On the other hand, it is equally true that English fair play in international affairs is subject to the "limitations of the group." English diplomacy has certainly been subject

[1] From *The Story of Scotland Yard,* by Sir Basil Thomson, pp. 91 f., copyright 1935, 1936, reprinted with permission by Doubleday, Doran and Co., Inc., New York.

to what may be called the double standard of judgment, to no less degree than any other imperialistic power.

There is much truth in the thesis developed by several thinkers of the past and ably reviewed in Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr's study, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*. When the collective interests of his country are concerned, the average man's conception of justice, decency, fairness, and moderation is frequently very different from his conception of all these virtues when his country is a disinterested observer of an international event; so the moral standards of the national group are different from the standards employed by the same men in their private affairs. To borrow from a Scottish preacher, "The Almighty is compelled to do many things in his offeecial capacity which he would scorn to do as a private individual."[1] The story of the double standard of judgment in English foreign policies is too well known to need elaboration here.[2]

Swift in his *Art of Political Lying* observed: "Who first reduced *lying* into an art, and adapted it to politicks, is not so clear from history, although I have made some diligent inquiries."[3] The history of international rivalries has been made no simpler by the course of events in the past two hundred years. Every nation that has risen to power and prestige has contributed its part to diplomatic craftiness, and certainly England's share of guile has not been least among the nations; in the international arena her claim to the distinction of the country of fair play is incontrovertibly questioned by the extent of her possessions.

In the realm of private morals, however, England's stand-

[1] Inge, W. R., *More Lay Thoughts of a Dean*, New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1932, p. 147.

[2] See our *Shackled Diplomacy, cit.*, pp. 41 ff., 213 ff.

[3] Swift, J., *Works*, London, 1765, Vol. VIII, p. 10.

ards are enviable. A succinct statement of the British conception of the good man may be drawn from a characteristic code attributed to George V:

"Teach me to be obedient to the rules of the game.

"Teach me to distinguish between sentiment and sentimentality, admiring the one and despising the other.

"Teach me neither to proffer nor to receive cheap praise.

"If I am called upon to suffer, let me be like a well-bred beast that goes away to suffer in silence.

"Teach me to win, if I may; if I may not, teach me to be a good loser.

"Teach me neither to cry for the moon nor to cry over spilt milk."

Chapter II

THE MATURE MAN OF ACTION

ENGLISH CONSERVATISM

IT HAS become a common practice among students of the comparative psychology of nations to define the Englishman as a man of action. The British Empire, forged as it has been in such large part by self-appointed amateurs, bears impressive testimony to the native genius for action. The accepted formula, however, is subject to improvement; it is still more useful as a key to the complexities of the English national character if we further qualify the Englishman as a mature man of action.

Indeed, the distinguishing mark of the Englishman as a man of action lies in his frugality; he is imbued with an admirable sense of economy of force. The English language is best adapted, in the very brevity of its Anglo-Saxon words, for brief, clear orders or directions. The Englishman is a mature man of action who rarely, if ever, yields to those outbursts of primitive passion which in other countries so often undo the results of the methodical labor of generations of men. National restraint and discipline appear to be the secret of the impressive fruitfulness of the Englishman's activity in the modern world.

We propose in the present chapter to study some of the more important manifestations of the Englishman's mature sense of

economy of action, namely, English conservatism, the art of compromise, emotional control, and the national sense of hierarchy. We shall begin with a brief analysis of English conservatism.

An ingrained reluctance to undo what has been done, to relinquish a passable reality for an untried utopia, may serve to explain why England has so markedly surpassed each and every one of her contemporaries on the Continent in international prestige, if not in actual strength. The English have outdistanced their closest rivals, some of whom, like the Germans, are more numerous, or, like the French, were more numerous at the end of the eighteenth and in the first quarter of the nineteenth century; and this because the English to a smaller extent than any other nation have imitated Penelope. The other European nations only too frequently destroy in the night of unrest and agitation—of revolution or dictatorship or fruitless war—the tissue of progress laboriously produced during the day of constructive effort and healthy inspiration.

The English have understood better than any other nation that continuity is a virtue, and that each generation is fortified against the various adversities of life if it preserves the results of the effort expended by former generations. The English people may preserve some unnecessary and even undesirable customs, institutions, and laws, but this drawback does not appear too high a price for their power of preserving social and national continuity. It is said that the House of Lords owes its existence to the English taste for antiquities and curiosities. This English characteristic, perhaps, was what inspired Emerson to write in his *English Traits:* "The English power resides also in their dislike of change." The Eng-

lish seem to have felt throughout their history that man's desire for the durability of his creations is a supremely important human quality, and one which has contributed largely to his superiority over the lower animals. In the animal kingdom each family begins, in its effort of self-assertion against the external world, almost exactly where its distant ancestors began; the lower animals thus practice the most wasteful and disastrous kind of originality.

The well-known English fondness for durable things is frequently portrayed in English literature. An episode in Kipling's *Actions and Reactions* may be recalled. George Chapin, a young country gentleman, had ordered Cloke, the caretaker, to rebuild a footbridge. George thought that larch-poles were good enough for the purpose. This was not the opinion of Cloke, who showed deferential but unmistakable disgust at the idea of "a temp'ry job" and was strongly for six-by-eight oak timbers. His employer's rejoinder that they were not building a railway bridge and that in America "half-a-dozen two-by-four bits would be ample" left the good man unmoved from his forecast to the effect that failing to use oak the job would have to be done again by the time the young master—a baby at the time—was married. "You have no call to regard my words, but you can't get out of this," concluded the old undiluted Briton. Conquering his impatience, young and traveled George conceded resignedly: "No . . . I have been realizing this for some time. Make it oak then; we can't get out of it." [1]

Steadiness is respected in England as an indispensable virtue. "Steady, girl," the cockney horse-cab driver used to admonish

[1] Kipling, R., *Actions and Reactions,* New York, Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1909, p. 53.

his impatient horse. His successor, the cockney chauffeur, stifles foreign curiosity as to the reason of some English practices, like the left-hand traffic turns, with the words: "O Lord, sir, it was always so!" King and commoner unite in the love of established custom; a king that would disregard an important traditional standard, though personally popular, must go, as the abrupt termination of the reign of Edward VIII demonstrated. Arnold Bennett's Darius Clayhanger "did not buy more new things than he could help." He preferred second-hand articles because they were "broke in," as he would prefer a trained horse to an untrained one.[1] It was remarked by Edward VIII as Prince of Wales that his father detested three things—"ultra-modern novels, painted fingers, and new shoes."[2] Collectors of epitaphs have noted some curious illustrations of English conservatism, such as the following:

"JONATHAN THOMPSON

"A Good Husband and Affectionate Father
Whose Disconsolate Widow and Orphans
Continue to Carry on the Tripes and Trotter Business
In the Same Shop as Before Their Bereavement"

. . . . . .

"Here Lie the Bones of Hubert Smith
And What Is Somewhat Rarish
He Was Born, Reared and Hanged
All in the Same Here Parish"[3]

Conservatism, of course, is not an unmixed blessing; nothing is. In great things and small a price must be paid for con-

[1] Bennett, A., *Clayhanger,* New York, Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1922.
[2] Sackville, M., "The Days of the King," *The Windsor Magazine,* April, 1935.
[3] Smith, G., "Young Mortality," *Atlantic Monthly,* July, 1936, p. 17.

servatism; but the English think, justly enough, that it is worth the price.

Some methods and techniques in various English industries are obsolete and therefore uneconomical. As an entertaining instance, may be cited the story related by Mr. Harold E. Scarborough of how a contractor "muddled through" with the installation of water, gas, and electricity for the house purchased by an American in a suburb of London. One day workmen came, dug a trench from the main road, "fiddled about the pipes and tiles, filled in the trench, and departed." No water, gas, or electricity were brought to the house; not yet. A few days later workmen appeared again and the operation was repeated with the same result; that is, the house continued to be uninhabitable. A few days later the performance was repeated once more. When for the fourth time workmen appeared and began to excavate the trench, the American decided to inquire of the builder how long this renewed digging and filling in was to continue before the house would be supplied with water and light. He was informed that the inspector from the Water Board had been to examine the installation, and that in due course inspectors from the gas and electric companies would follow.

> "'But,' the American expostulated, 'that will mean six times that your workmen will have excavated and filled in these trenches. Why not dig one trench for all three services, install them, and fill it in after having the three inspectors simultaneously pass their verdicts?'
>
> "The builder turned a cold and baleful eye upon him.
>
> "'We never do it like that,' he replied stiffly." [1]

[1] From *England Muddles Through,* by H. E. Scarborough, New York, 1932, pp. 60 f. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

English muddling through in the textile industry, for instance, has made it possible for the Japanese to compete successfully in the world markets with Manchester.

War or no war, the British ways tend to remain intact. Dr. Harvey Cushing relates:

> "Mr. Buttrick, G.E.B., told me Saturday when I saw him in Camiers of his encountering in Liverpool a former friend—a Canadian lumber merchant—who had drifted over with the first contingent and was now in British service. Mr. B. asked him what he was doing and he said he was a sort of magnified stevedore engaged in unloading lumber ships. He was given the job presumably because he owned lumber mills and therefore knew lumber when he saw it. Being given it, he got to work and found them unloading the heavy timber with an antiquated apparatus which necessitated placing a chain on each end of every beam, and which then deposited them in a huge pile on the dock. The pile subsequently had to be disentangled, like picking out jackstraws, and sorted into some six or eight sizes—a performance which took about ten days. He therefore installed an unloading device with a long swinging crane which could not only pick up a log in its middle, but deposit it on the dock in its appropriate pile according to size. It took about ten hours for the whole performance. 'But,' he added, 'the curious thing is they dislike me for it.'"[1]

As a more serious instance of "muddling through" during the World War, it may be mentioned that Great Britain,

[1] From *Leaves from a Surgeon's Journal*, by Harvey Cushing, an Atlantic Monthly Press Publication, Boston, 1936, pp. 266 f. Reprinted by permission of Little, Brown & Co.

despite her vast industrial potentialities, for a long time lagged behind the Germans in supplying the troops with machine guns, and thus contributed to what Mr. Lloyd George correctly calls the melting-down of the overwhelming superiority in man power which the Allies enjoyed at the beginning of the war "to the dimensions of dubious equality." [1] History seems, however, to prove that for the Englishman, at any rate, conservatism pays on the whole.

The British Parliament is convened and prorogued in unintelligible old French formulas; legal phrases are still couched in medieval French and Latin; judges and barristers wear eighteenth-century wigs; English school children still struggle with the late Roman and Frankish currency system and the old Germanic system of weights and measures, which the Englishman alone considers superior to the metric system. But what the Englishman may lose in international competition as a result of his conservative ways and his habit of "muddling through," he more than regains through the assurance of moral, economic, and political stability. He does not have to pay ruinous bills for wasteful political and social experiments. For this exemption England is indebted to the instinct for conservatism possessed by the nation as a whole. The Englishman definitely prefers the exercise of common sense, the accumulated wisdom of the race, to all millennium-promising experimentation. In England the radicalism of the postwar period, though radicalism of a mild variety, enjoyed only a brief triumph. In 1929 the Labour party obtained two hundred and eighty-seven seats in the House of Commons; but in 1931 it returned only fifty-two. Thus the man in the street turned away from the socialistic Santa Claus, realizing

[1] *War Memoirs,* Boston, Little, Brown & Co., 1936, Vol. V, p. 137.

in good time that such a Santa Claus must collect in due season and is apt to prove a hard collector in the long run.

This interesting English phenomenon, the conservatism of the man in the street, has found a curious echo in a story told by Mr. Henry W. Nevinson. Soon after the World War, while passport regulations were still stringent, as Mr. Nevinson recounts, his son Richard, an artist, applied to the Foreign Office for a visa:

> "The official asked him: 'Are you related to that man, Henry Nevinson?' 'He is my father,' Richard replied. 'He is a man of very violent opinions, isn't he?' asked the official. 'Oh, dear no!' said Richard, having known me from childhood; 'he's the mildest of men.' 'When I say violent opinions,' the official explained, 'I mean he doesn't see eye to eye with the man in the street. Now, does he?' Only what the Ministers call an answer in the negative was possible, and the *visa* was refused, but our language was enriched by an official definition of violence unsurpassed in precision." [1]

During the World War, in the face of the wanton destruction prevailing in the zone of operations, the English often gave refreshing examples of their scrupulous respect for law, order, and property. While Colonel E. L. Spears was at Sir John French's quarters at Le Cateau, a message came from a cavalry detachment at Binche which caused the French much amusement. The British cavalry commander wanted to know whether he was justified in loopholing the walls of the farm-

[1] *Changes and Chances,* New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1923, p. viii (Preface).

house in which his staff was stationed. As Colonel Spears remarks:

> "The inveterate British respect for law, order, and property could not be shaken by the mere fact of there being a war on. One wondered whether officers would not indent for coroners, complete with juries, to sit on the first casualties." [1]

In the chaos of open or covert revolutions that swept over Europe in the wake of the World War, England furnished a reassuring spectacle of steadiness and soundness, despite the serious economic difficulties of the two bitter decades of readjustment. This steady progress England owes not so much to the upper classes, which are fairly conservative the world over, but primarily to the sound conservatism of the masses of her inhabitants. It is thanks to this enviable condition that the Marxian brand of socialism met with bloodless, yet decisive, defeat in England; in the past decade important Labour leaders, such as MacDonald, Snowden, and others have left their party in favor of co-operation with the Conservatives. This action of the Labour leaders was denounced as apostasy by the Continental Socialists. Yet they ought to have been prepared for the worst, for the socialistic Prime Minister had not slighted the ancient custom of kissing the King's hand upon receiving his commission. And in Paris in 1928, when he rose to address "a group of French Deputies, for the most part Socialists," this spokesman of the Labour party revealed himself as a full-fledged British patriot in this astounding request: "Gentlemen, before taking up our subject I think it will be fitting to all of

[1] From *Liaison, 1914,* by Brigadier General Spears, 1931, p. 138; reprinted with permission by Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., New York.

you if we pause in silence and pray to God for the recovery of our King, who at this very moment is fighting against death." [1] In his further political evolution, Mr. MacDonald reached the point where conversion from what appeared an exaggerated radicalism in British eyes to a benevolent conservatism became inevitable for a man of sound political instincts. Disraeli confessed to a similar metamorphosis in these significant words: "This respect for precedent, this clinging to prescription, this reverence for antiquity, which are so often ridiculed by conceited and superficial minds, appear to me to have their origin in a profound knowledge of human nature." [2]

But, again, conservatism like other good things carries in itself an element of danger. Besides those handicaps in the economic field mentioned above, at least two other significant dangers implied in conservatism must be borne in mind. One is a certain inclination to apathy in the ordinary course of public life, resulting from the belief that history is a continuous repetition of the past; another is the tendency toward obdurate resistance to reforms, especially those that purport to improve the condition of the masses at the expense of privileged individuals. The English have avoided, on the whole, the dangers both of reckless reformation and of ignorant indifference to the lessons of history; a slow but steady progress in social legislation has taken place. John Buchan expresses a typically English point of view in the introduction to his *Great Britain:* "History gives us a kind of chart, and we dare not surrender even a small rushlight in the darkness. The hasty reformer who does not remember the past will find

[1] Maurois, A., "George V and the British Crown," *Atlantic Monthly,* May, 1935, p. 587.

[2] Quoted in Maurois, A., *Disraeli,* New York, D. Appleton and Co., 1928, p. 106.

himself condemned to repeat it."[1] The English admit reforms, and even drastic ones. Thus it was that the Reform Act of 1832 and subsequent reform acts enlarging the franchise were shaped and set in motion, without serious political or social upheaval. It may be recalled that it was under a Conservative Government that English women received the suffrage.

THE ART OF COMPROMISE

Social progress in England may be viewed as a moving equilibrium. To preserve social equilibrium amidst the salutary or the merely unavoidable changes which are called progress, the Englishman practices, with admirable dexterity and reasonableness, though not without growling, the art of compromise. Thus the wisdom of the mature man of action, who thoroughly understands the law of economy of force, counterbalances the proverbial obstinacy of the Briton. He does not believe in intransigency for its own sake, and his tenacity of purpose is modified by a readiness to admit reasonable compromise. Thus the bulldog in him can play the spaniel at need; and what is exceedingly important is that he retains his ability for obstinate resistance side by side with his aptitude for compromise.

"Compromise," says George Santayana, "is odious to passionate natures because it seems a surrender, and to intellectual natures because it seems a confusion."[2] The Englishman seems to escape these drawbacks; he can practice compromise without undue confusion and, especially, without at all losing the love for independence and the courage of protest.

[1] Buchan, J., Editor, *The Nations of To-Day: Great Britain,* Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1923, Vol. II, p. xii.

[2] *Soliloquies in England,* New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922, p. 83.

In political or economic conflicts, national and international, the Englishman behaves like some weather-beaten fisherman trawling for fish. The experienced fisherman knows that he must compromise with the elements; it is the inexperienced fisherman who fights on until he is broken. The English have profited well, for example, by the lesson of the loss of the American colonies, caused by unwillingness to compromise. Since then, their ability to compromise, the adaptability of the English nation, has preserved for it the position of leadership in the British Empire. At the same time the political intransigence and lack of adaptability on the part of the crowned heads of Austria, Germany, Turkey, and Russia brought about the overthrow of their thrones and inflicted untold sufferings upon their hapless nations.[1] It will be recalled that the Established Church itself is a compromise between Catholicism and Calvinism, between Rome and Geneva.

Honesty demands the observation, however, that at times John Bull's art of compromise is scarcely to be distinguished from political hypocrisy of a rather shabby sort. To borrow from Max O'Rell, who understood John Bull so well:

> "And what a diplomatist he is! Ask him for a reform, and he will stare at you astonished, assuring you that all is (already!) for the best in the best of worlds. But shake your fist at him, and show him that you mean to have that reform, and he will smile, and say: 'Oh, that's all right, I beg your pardon, I didn't know that you were in earnest.'"[2]

[1] Cf. Toynbee, A. J., "A British View of British Foreign Policy," *The Yale Review*, September, 1933, pp. 52-65.

[2] *English Pharisees, French Crocodiles, and Other Anglo-French Typical Characters*, Toronto, 1892, p. 14.

"To the English," Clemenceau used to say, "one must speak with firmness." [1]

In the course of history the Englishman has been permeated with the wisdom of the Greek saying: "It is a malady of the soul to be in love with impossible things." Furthermore, the Englishman also understands more clearly, or at least practices more honestly and consistently than the Greeks ever did, the precepts of Aristophanes on the wisdom of listening to the other side. He has made political broadmindedness, taken in the right sense of the term, an obligatory qualification for public men. Hence the belief that the Opposition—significantly called "His Majesty's Opposition" as a *pendant* to His Majesty's Government—is as vital as the Government itself. This distinctly English conception of political co-operation has been imitated very imperfectly by even the more balanced and orderly democracies on the Continent. Again, it was a Frenchman, Voltaire, who framed what might well be taken as conservative England's declaration to one and all radical propagandists: "I do not care a straw for what you say, but I would give my life for your right to say it."

A. Lawrence Lowell, in his study of the English Constitution, lucidly contrasted the dogmatic rigidity of the alignment of political parties on the Continent with the political liberties extended to party members in England. On the Continent, political parties are divided from each other by dogmatic doctrines, at times of a fanatical pitch; in England, political parties "are not separated by any profound divergence in political creed, but are essentially instruments of government contending over concrete issues." [2] On the Continent, shifting from

[1] Bugnet, C., "Foch et Clemenceau," *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 15 décembre 1936, p. 876.

[2] Lowell, A. L., *The Government of England,* New York, The Macmillan Company, 1908, Vol. II, pp. 536 f.

one party affiliation to another is a risky enterprise, especially for a prominent member; it is treated by constituents as political apostasy, and is suspiciously viewed by the general public. In England, where the sound art of compromise is a positive virtue, "a man will cling to his party so long as its policy on the whole accords with his views better than the policy of its rival, and when it ceases to do so he will cross over to the other side." [1]

To repeat, the liberty of political compromise is granted in England, not only to the rank-and-file members of a party, but also to those who aspire to highest positions in government. Thus Disraeli attained to the leadership of the Conservatives, despite the fact that his political career began in the Radical party. Similarly, Gladstone, the leader of the Liberals, began his career in the Conservative camp; while Lord Derby, who had served as Secretary for Foreign Affairs under Disraeli, became Colonial Minister in Gladstone's cabinet. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald attained the headship of a Unionist cabinet after abandoning the Labour party leadership. One of the most valuable acquisitions of the Conservatives in recent times was Mr. Winston Churchill, who had been with the Liberals before. Since there is no apostasy in changing from one political party to another, personal friendship between outstanding men of opposing parties is taken as a matter of course in England.

The borrowing by the Government of the Opposition's recipes for the solution of even very crucial problems is done in England without any loss of face or prestige, while the party grumbles who thus sustains the "stealing." A historic case of such "borrowing," entertainingly related by Max O'Rell, is typical of English political history:

[1] Lowell, A. L., *The Government of England,* New York, The Macmillan Company, 1908, Vol. II, pp. 536 f.

"When Lord Beaconsfield deftly snatched Cyprus from the 'unspeakable' Turk, in 1878, and, presenting it to John Bull, asked him to admire the fine catch, John's Liberal sons turned up their noses and declared that the honesty of the proceeding was dubious, and vowed the place was not fit to send British soldiers to. 'It would hardly be humane to send our convicts there,' they said: 'not even flies could stand the climate.' Two years later the Tories went out of office, and the Liberals came to power. What happened? You think, perhaps, that the Liberals promptly restored the island to the Turks with their compliments and apologies? Catch them! Better than that. No sooner were the Tories out of office than a yacht of three leading Liberals might have been seen sailing toward Cyprus, which, it would seem, a simple change of ministry had changed into a health resort. In the beginning of May of the current year the Liberal government gave orders to the military occupation in Egypt to send to Cyprus all the sick soldiers who were in a fit condition to be transported—not to finish them up, but actually to hasten their convalescence."[1]

Recent decades have furnished several notable examples of political borrowing, back and forth, between the Government and the Opposition. This method of procedure has been among the most fertile achievements of the Englishman's aptitude for compromise, as it has been also one of the impressive guarantees of the stability of England and of the continuity of her major policies.

Mr. Baldwin, having assumed the leadership of the Conserva-

[1] *English Pharisees, French Crocodiles and Other Anglo-French Typical Characters,* Toronto, 1892, pp. 213 f.

tives in May, 1923, went before the country in January, 1924, on the issue of a protective tariff, which he considered an urgent need. The country was not yet ready to support the scheme destined to be adopted a few years later under the leadership of a rival party, and the Conservatives were replaced in power by the Labourites. When Labour thus took office for the first time, the expectations of many Continental and a few English revolutionaries met with prompt disillusionment; nothing revolutionary ensued. The budget made by the first Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Philip Snowden, pleased even the City bankers. When the miners went on strike, discontented by the rise of prices accompanying the rise of sterling in the international exchange and distressed by the prospect of substantial shipments of coal to be made by the German Government under the reparations agreement of 1923, the Labour Government's attitude toward the miners was not any less stern than that of the Conservative cabinet which succeeded the first administration of Mr. MacDonald in November, 1924, when the *Daily Mail* unmasked the Bolshevist infiltration into the Labour organizations. On the other hand, the Conservative party, which had decried the Labour Government's flirting with the extreme left groups among the miners, proceeded, once in office, to bribe the same miners not to strike, by subsidizing them out of the funds of the Exchequer. The Conservatives correctly judged that such a double compromise at that time was for the country's good, as a safety valve for the discontent that threatened an explosion of serious proportions.

When the general strike came on May 3, 1926, as an expression of the workers' cumulative discontent gathered in the course of the post-war years and fanned up by Communistic propaganda, the Government handled the situation calmly.

It rapidly triumphed, as it was bound to do, thanks to various happy peculiarities of the national character. The general strike was called off on May 12 so that negotiations might proceed, and work was generally resumed on May 17. Next, some of the less enlightened intransigent employers prepared to crush the Labour influence once and for ever by drastically discharging and otherwise victimizing the more active Trade Union element. The Conservative Prime Minister, Mr. Stanley Baldwin, arranged for an appeal against such victimization, which was promptly broadcast by the King.[1] When this first attempt in English history to use the weapon of a general strike completely failed because of the average Englishman's instinctive abhorrence of violent methods in political and economic struggle, the moral generally drawn by responsible leaders of Labour was "never again."

A recent impressive example of English adjustment and preservation of political equilibrium is found in the election of November 14, 1935, when ten parties competed for six hundred and fifteen seats in the House of Commons. On paper it appeared to be an unusual electoral confusion for England. In reality, the balance of power was securely in the hands of the electoral center, compounded of the Conservatives, of the Liberals who under the name of National Liberals joined forces with them, and of the Labourites who chose the same right path under the label of National Labourites. This powerful coalition was augmented by smaller groups labeled Nationalists and Independent Nationalists.

The general course of political adjustment in England as determined by the art of compromise is aptly summed up by A. Lawrence Lowell in the following words:

[1] Scarborough, H. E., *op. cit.*, pp. 181 ff.

"This certainly conduces to safety and is a healthy political condition. It does not obstruct progress, but prevents the movement from being too rapid, and avoids violent changes, or conflicts that are perilously acute. . . . Changes in the British government will take place, but they will come slowly, the organism constantly adjusting itself to a new equilibrium, and the only safe prediction is that each fresh balance of forces will probably be as intricate, as nicely adjusted, and as worthy of study, as the ones that have gone before." [1]

The quarter of a century which has passed since these words were written has not belied them. It seems permissible to prophesy that though some changes in parliamentary procedure may take place in England, for instance some measures which we may hope will assure minorities more adequate representation, it will be a "long time before the great gilded mace on the Speaker's table is replaced either by dictator's fasces or the Communists' sickle and hammer." [2]

Any discussion of the Englishman's art of compromise as a manifestation of his political maturity should mention that there is something on which the English majority never compromises in political matters. This is the inviolability of the Englishman's fundamental liberties. In fairness to the keen student of England from whom less flattering reflections have been quoted, we shall end with the following summary of Max O'Rell's on the subject of the Englishman's most admirable quality, his uncompromising love of liberty:

[1] From *The Government of England*, by A. Lawrence Lowell, New York, 1908, Vol. II, pp. 536 f. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

[2] Scarborough, H. E., *op. cit.*, pp. 192 f.

"Worshiping his old monarchy, devoted to his old institutions, but ravenous for justice and liberty, he could be ready to-day to demolish both monarchy and constitution, as he did in the seventeenth century, if his liberty ran the least danger. In politics, possessing the virtues that are indispensable to the prosperity of a nation—respect of the law and respect of power clearly manifested—he always bows to the decision of the majority. Refusing to submit to despotism in any shape or form, he himself keeps in order and discipline all his paid guides and governors: his Queen, his princes, his ministers, his generals, his judges, his priests. Wise, industrious, and persevering, never doubting his strength, above all minding his own business, and imposing upon all their attributions and duties, from his sovereign down to the humblest citizen, he has chosen for his motto: '*Fais bien se que tu fais* (Do well what you are doing).'"[1]

EMOTIONAL CONTROL

The saying quoted by Montesquieu in a letter to Guasco, March 12, 1750, does not seem to be contradicted by present characteristics of the English people: "In England, men are more manly and women are less womanish than elsewhere."[2] Not only his puritanic stoicism, his ingrained abhorrence of self-indulgence, but also his sense of economy of force, demanding calmness and condemning haste and confusion, account for the Englishman's remarkable control of the

[1] O'Rell, M. (Paul Blouët), *English Pharisees, French Crocodiles, and Other Anglo-French Typical Characters, op. cit.*, pp. 15 f.

[2] Montesquieu, *Correspondence*, Paris, Edward Champion, 1914, t. II, p. 261.

emotions. Emotion is instinctively distrusted by the mature man of action as something which might readily betray one into hasty action. It is bad taste, the most formidable word an Englishman can pronounce, to allow one's anger or fear or grief or joy to be written on one's face to attract the attention of every passer-by. The marked calm of British countenances is one of the first impressions that a foreign visitor receives upon landing in England or upon boarding an English steamer. This is well described by an American writer, Richard G. White:

> "When I landed, one of the very few differences I observed between the people I had left and those among whom I had come was a calmer and more placid expression of countenance. This in the descending scale of intelligence became a stolid look, the outward sign of mental sluggishness. But, higher or lower, in degree or in kind, there it was, *placidity* instead of a look of intentness and anxiety." [1]

The Englishman's self-control gives him remarkable likeness to the ancient Roman, of whom H. O. Taylor aptly said:

> "To give way to passion was beneath a Roman. In affairs within the city, self-control was utmost political common sense; as to external military politics, self-control lay in daring what might be dared, in fearing what should be feared, and in abiding with unshakeable fortitude in whatever was resolved." [2]

[1] *England Within and Without,* Boston, 1894, p. 19; used by permission of, and by arrangement with, Houghton Mifflin Co.

[2] From *The Classical Heritage of the Middle Ages,* by Henry Osborne Taylor, New York, 1929, p. 22. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

The Englishman, in all probability, is not born more placid than any other northerner, but he certainly is carefully trained to control his emotions and to be inconspicuous in voice, manner, and dress. "Unobtrusive," says Galsworthy about one of his heroes, "that was the word—unobtrusive, always! . . . He had never seemed to wish to be appreciated, or even remembered, by anyone." [1]

When a proper Britisher has spent some years in a snug English neighborhood without committing the indiscretion of addressing his neighbors, he is mentioned by them as "a nice quiet chap." The Englishman likes his dog not only for the animal's fidelity, but also because the dog, though he can feel deeply, is a silent companion. "Animals," one can read in George Eliot's *Scenes of Clerical Life,* "are such agreeable friends—they ask no questions, they pass no criticisms."

The author of the present volume was grateful for the quiet of Ilford, in Essex, a post-war "garden city" of middle-class commuters. In the early evening hours he would pass along the winding and economically lighted streets. The windows opening on the streets were dark, for the families congregated in the more private back rooms; the conversation, if any, was subdued in tone, and the radios and phonographs sounded *pianissimo.* The silence was at times a trifle uncanny; but no hold-ups occurred; indeed, not even friendly solicitations for small cash. The author also vividly recalls how much impressed he was with the well-contained liveliness of the college students who crowded the narrow pavements of Oxford at the hour of afternoon tea; moving through the dense stream of healthy youthful humanity, one could converse with his companion without raising the voice.

Count Keyserling, though he complains that his habit of

[1] *Swan Song,* Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928, p. 351.

self-analysis was thought by his English acquaintances little short of indecent, found excellent words with which to express his admiration for English placidity, discreetness, and control of the emotions:

> "It is, moreover, precisely this practice which safeguards the private rights of the individual. English convention makes it taboo to inquire after personal matters unless they are spontaneously disclosed. And on the other hand personal matters should hardly ever be disclosed: one does not divulge one's emotions. Contrariwise, the forms of the group life should be wholly adjusted to the needs of one's private emotions. This leads to a fundamentally complete satisfaction of the two polar extremes of life—the private and the group life. And this complete satisfaction suffices to explain why one meets so little of the ugly in England: no envy, no rudeness, no indiscretions, no mob spirit—and yet no intrusive individualism." [1]

M. Jacques Bardoux, analyzing the psychological factors involved in The Hague Reparations Conference of 1931, described Mr. Philip Snowden, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, as a man "coolly passionate" (*passionné à froid*).[2] This is a happy expression and well sums up the true nature of the Englishman's control of the emotions. It may, however, be observed that when the English imitate the effusiveness of their Continental neighbors, they are blind to their own inconsistency. Such expressions as "It is most frightfully sporting of you!" or "It is perfectly gorgeous!" do not find ready equivalents in French or German. Joseph Conrad noted: "In the British Navy where human values are thoroughly understood,

[1] Keyserling, H., *Europe,* New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1928, p. 29.
[2] *Le Temps,* 11 avril 1931.

the highest signal of commendation complimenting a ship on some achievement consists exactly of these two simple words, 'Well done,' followed by the name of the ship. Not marvellously done, astonishingly done, wonderfully done—no, only just *'Well done, so and so.'"*[1] There is, however, nothing specifically English in such restrained language; the other armies and navies practice the same kind of manly restraint. For example, when Joffre and Foch were elevated to the dignity of marshals, the resolution adopted by the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate ordering the promotions simply said: "General of Division Joffre [Foch] is named Marshal of France for his services to the country."

Control of the emotions is not infrequently regarded by the English as a kind of moral monopoly which distinguishes the Anglo-Saxon race. It may be permissible to mention that though the English gibe at the kissing indulged in as a social custom by exuberant Continentals, they themselves are not wholly free from such expression. Thus Southey writes of no lesser hero than the dying Nelson:

> "His previous order for preparing to anchor had shown how clearly he foresaw the necessity of this. Presently calling Hardy back, he said to him in a low voice: 'Don't throw me overboard'; and he desired that he might be buried by his parents, unless it should please the King to order otherwise. Then reverting to private feelings: 'Take care of my dear Lady Hamilton, Hardy; take care of poor Lady Hamilton. Kiss me, Hardy,' said he. Hardy knelt down and kissed his cheek, and Nelson said: 'Now I am satisfied. Thank God, I have done my duty!'"[2]

[1] *Notes on Life and Letters,* New York, Doubleday, Page and Co., 1921, p. 179.

[2] Southey, R., *Life of Nelson,* Second Edition, London, George Routledge and Sons, 1886, pp. 273 f.

This free expression of emotion on the part of England's greatest hero gave Mr. Bernard Shaw occasion to extol the self-control of the Irish Wellington "who had to fight Napoleon's armies, Napoleon's marshals, and finally Napoleon himself without one moment of illusion as to the human material he had to command, without one gush of the 'Kiss me, Hardy' emotion which enabled Nelson to idolize his crews and his staff." [1] We have not yet seen Mr. Shaw's comment upon the emotional outburst of which Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig was guilty on receiving the news of his son's birth. The Field-Marshal's biographer described the scene as follows:

> "During this anxious month of March [1918], Haig's mind was eased on one great burden. While her husband was at home on a brief visit Lady Haig gave birth to a son. Haig's mind had been torn between his eagerness to have an heir and his concern for Lady Haig's health, and when his doctor allayed his fears, bringing the good news that the son and heir was born, the barrier behind which Haig concealed his emotions for once broke down. Impulsively he embraced the doctor, kissing him on each cheek. 'Like a damned foreigner!' the doctor added in recounting the incident." [2]

Notwithstanding such instances, it remains true that the Englishman is brought up to repress his emotions with an effectiveness that astonishes his Continental neighbors. The imperturbability of the typical English butler has enriched the comic repertoire of many lands. Some foreign observers have

[1] *John Bull's Other Island,* New York, Brentano's, 1918, "Preface for Politicians," p. xii.

[2] Charteris, J., *Field-Marshal Earl Haig,* New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929, p. 318.

been so baffled by the Englishman's self-possession as to be led to extravagant explanations of this national trait, as was that brilliant French student of England, Hippolyte Taine.

Despite exaggerations, probably inevitable in the case of such complex psychological matters, keen foreign students of England well understand and properly appreciate the English capacity for suppressing emotions. Some of them rightly connect this capacity not only with the Englishman's stoic Puritanism, but also with his mature sense of economy in the expenditure of strength: "The human being is ten times stronger when his pulse continues calm, and when his judgment remains free from the confusing influence of emotions. The consequences and the shades of a type are innumerable." [1]

Since the repercussions of the Englishman's mentality on public affairs interest us above all in the present study, it seems important to note that his placidity is sometimes mistaken by writers on England for mere inertia and indolent *laissez-faire*. There is a vital distinction to be drawn between calmness and spineless inertia. The English nation is, to be sure, not altogether immune to *laissez-faire* tendencies; but their practiced placidity, the refusal to be perturbed by minor problems, "a capital social lubricant," [2]—as Mr. Waugh happily describes it, is frequently underrated by superficial observers.

The stoicism of English parents during the World War afforded vital expression of their emotional control. Similar stoicism existed, of course, in all the belligerent countries, but it was shown in England not only in the readiness to bear with fortitude the supreme sacrifices exacted of high and

[1] *Notes on England*, New York, Henry Holt and Co., 1876, p. 64.

[2] Waugh, A., *Myself When Young*, New York, Brentano's, 1924, p. 59; published by Coward-McCann.

humble alike, but also in a rigid concealment of anxiety and grief which was peculiarly English.

It is needless to insist that nothing would be more inexact than to say that the English are unfeeling people. Was not England a nursery if not the cradle of sentimentalism in literature? More often than not there is a deeper emotion behind the Englishman's phlegm than behind the apparent outbursts of passion of a Latin.

To be of real benefit and to promote fruitful action, repressed emotions require a safety valve of some sort, a provision for indirect externalization. The Englishman finds outlet, as do other men, through prayer and the expression of religion in general, in the indulgence of humor, in the enjoyment of nature and the fine arts; also in sport and in transports of imperialism. Of these various escapes afforded for pent-up emotions, the enjoyment of a sense of humor and of the fine arts deserves special attention, as presenting significant material for documentation on English self-control.

During the World War, in the trenches, with their "mud and blood, the stink and the racket, and the endless nightmare of being pitchforked into fire without rhyme or reason," the Briton's defiant sense of humor was often his salvation.

The following passage happily illustrates the place assigned to defensive humor in the English scheme of things:

> "Then there's the matter of grousing; grousing among themselves about this and that. You would be deceived about this until you got to know them a bit. It's a queer thing, and not easy to explain; but grousing is one of the passions of their lives; or perhaps it would be truer to say a favorite form of recreation. But, mark you this,

only when everything is going smoothly, and when there is nothing real to grumble about. It would seem to be absolutely forbidden to growl when there's anything to growl about; a sort of unwritten law which, since we've been out here anyhow, is never transgressed.

"It's rather fine, this, and very English. So long as there is a little intermittent grousing going on, you can be quite sure of two things: there's nothing wrong and the men are in good spirits and content. If there is no grousing, it means one of two things: either the men are angered about something, in which case they will be unusually silent; or we are up against real difficulties and hardships, involving real suffering, in which case there will be a lot of chaffing and joke-cracking, and apparent merriment." [1]

In a moment of such grousing, a patriotic Briton composed the following popular lines:

"My Tuesdays are meatless,
My Wednesdays are wheatless,
It is getting more eatless each day;
My home is heatless,
My bed is sheetless,—
All are sent to the Y.M.C.A.

"The barrooms are treatless,
My coffee is sweetless,
Each day I get poorer and wiser;
My stockings are feetless,
My trousers are seatless,—
My God, how I do hate the Kaiser!"

[1] "Letters from the Firing Line," *The Forum*, 1917, Vol. 57, p. 53.

Spread in many copies through the trenches, this jingle fell into the hands of the German military authorities, who took it quite seriously as a proof of the difficult economic situation and profound war-weariness of the British. It was duly published in the *Hamburger Nachrichten* in translation:

> "*Am Dienstag fehlt mir Fleisch und Speck,*
> *Am Mittwoch ist das Weissbrot weg,* etc." [1]

With relation to the fine arts as emotional outlets, it is a well-known fact that sentimental novels have a much wider circulation in England than on the Continent. Dickens is, and in all probability will remain, a great favorite with the average Englishman not only because he is so much in earnest about the joys and sorrows of his humble folk, but also because he is the most sentimental of novelists and the most permeated with the genuine brand of British humor.

Of other types of good literature the average Englishman seems to prefer the drama, with its rich element of action and the possibilities which it offers for teaching moral lessons and, in general, for the exercise of influence toward character building. The Englishman is tolerant and at times very fond of lyric poetry, as its indulgence in emotion may be taken in strict privacy. The average Englishman's attitude regarding such fine arts as use fervid and, so to speak, loud public methods of expression, auditory and visual, is a mixed one. The actor still smacks of the mountebank and a respectable Briton intensely dislikes the notion of having a son or daughter in the profession. Being a practical man, however, he can bring himself to recognize and admire success even on the stage or in the moving pictures.

[1] Cushing, H., *Leaves from a Surgeon's Journal, cit.,* pp. 287 f.

Roma non cantat. Indeed, ancient Rome while she was building the foundations of her empire and until after the decadence following the Punic Wars and the influx of the neo-sophistic Greek ways of life set in, did not indulge in music festivals or favor any but martial music. The English are, among the western nations, the people most strikingly endowed with the empire-building temperament, which makes the repression of emotion a virtue. This probably explains why the English have built a great empire, but have failed to compose music comparable to that of their European contemporaries. It may also account for the fact that London has neglected to build an adequate opera house, though fine monumental buildings dedicated to English-speaking peoples, the Bush House, the Australia House, the Canada House, adorn the principal streets of the capital.

Music is "emotional stuff," Galsworthy's Soames Forsyte declares contemptuously.[1] An anecdote of the Victorian Age illustrates middle-class English feeling. Sigismond Thalberg, the German-Swiss pianist, was one evening performing before Queen Victoria at Windsor; the Queen, a German from the House of Coburg, accompanied the pianist with her voice. "The circumstance took air, and all England shuddered from sea to sea. The indecorum was never repeated."[2] Not a few true-born Englishmen of the present era think about the opera as did Mrs. Fisher, a character in a recent film. Commenting upon her undesirable son-in-law who was guilty of taking his wife to the opera, she exclaimed, indignantly: "The opera! Sensible people do not go to the opera. What is there to do at the opera? To hear foreigners holler!"

Emotion, when its object is common interest, can serve as

[1] *Swan Song, cit.*, p. 326. [2] Emerson, *English Traits, cit.*, p. 110.

a powerful means of uniting or integrating individuals into a body social. This social service of emotion has not escaped the Englishman's instinct as a mature man of action. Therefore, while extremely chary of expressing his emotions as a private individual, or of encouraging other individuals in the expression of their private emotions, the Englishman permits emotion full freedom as a member of a group and when the object is something that concerns the group as a whole. Two specifically English manifestations of such release of the emotions may be briefly discussed—public games and the affectionate reverence displayed toward the King and the members of the Royal Family.

During the World War, the French were often puzzled by the earnestness of English officers and men in the organization of games under the most trying circumstances. One reason for this love of games and sports on the part of the English seems to be furnished by their conception of the good man, whose morale is sustained by contests. But to account fully for the popularity of professional matches, the financial turnover of which, we are told by statisticians, is equal to one-half of the English national budget, some further explanation appears necessary.

What is that force which sends thousands upon thousands of Englishmen on Saturday afternoons to the cricket and football fields where the fortunes of a ball hold enormous crowds spellbound? The instinctive love of activity plays a part in this phenomenon of English life; the Englishman wants to be active in a tangible manner, even though vicariously, while he is seeking rest and recreation from the drudgeries of daily life and work. It must be remembered that eighty per cent of the population of England is concentrated in industrial cities. The great crowds at public games and athletic contests of all types

are composed of individuals who seek to escape the irritating spatial narrowness of an industrial city. But then the French shopkeepers and factory workers in Paris, Lyons, or Marseille, live and work in oppressively crowded conditions no less than the shopkeepers and workmen of London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, or Sheffield. Yet the French shopkeeper is satisfied with sitting leisurely in front of his shop during his free hours, chatting with his friends and neighbors; on Sunday he goes fishing in the river near-by, where there are very few fish to be caught, but where he is joined by friends, also in quest of quiet relaxation. Neither will the difference in the English and French conception of the good man suffice to explain this difference in the conception of recreation. It is quite possible that the Englishman's habitual repression of the emotions demands, as a compensation, an outlet as exciting as is a public match and the betting accompanying it. Moreover, it is an approved, because social, expression of emotion.[1]

One of the greatest dangers which beset the path of the man who makes the suppression of emotion a virtue is that his heart may run empty. The English as a nation have found an effective and fruitful insurance against this danger in the cult of the King as the living symbol of the unity and solidarity of the English nation and the British Empire. The result is that the sovereign whose personality and conduct meet the demands of the national *mores* and thus lend themselves to pan-British adulation is the most powerful emotional solvent, not only for the mother country herself, but also for the whole Empire.[2] As the French put it, the English nation adores itself

[1] Cf. Roe, D. C., "Le déclin du puritanisme," *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 15 mars 1935, pp. 317-349.

[2] The concreteness of the English mind is another contributing factor in this very English cult of the King. Cf. Maurois, A., "Hommage au Roi George V," *Revue de Paris,* 15 fevrier 1936: "The talk which the King made over the radio at Christmas to the citizens of Canada, Australia, New Zealand,

in adoring the Crown.[1] Monarchy, in Great Britain, is the greatest national rite, in which and through which the British commune regardless of social class, economic station, or even political creed, unless the latter is communism or socialism verging on communism, the two together constituting, however, a negligible quantity in British political life.

The rise of the lower middle class and its demand for a place in the sun, as well as the growth of economic difficulties resulting from the increasing complexity of domestic and international industrial and commercial organization, have produced in England, too, a certain tendency toward serious social disunion. This disruptive tendency, however, has been less manifest there than on the Continent, thanks to the cult of the King. It is indeed a sound political instinct of the English that seems to lead people of all classes to commune, emotionally, in the cult of the King and the Royal Family:

> "To an amazing degree the connecting link between these classes lies in the institution of monarchy which has not for centuries enjoyed in England such popularity as it possesses today. It is the difficult task of the King to try to be all things to all men, a task which he could not possibly fulfill if he retained any serious vestige of political power, but which, as things are, he discharges with remarkable success.
>
> "It is, of course, not at the instigation of the King him-

the Cape—in short to the entire Empire—was remarkable for its naturalness of tone. 'I am talking not to the Empire, but to each of you.' This phrase shows that horror of abstraction, a profoundly English trait of mind, which explains why the English, despite some sad experiences in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, have remained faithful to monarchy. Loyalty to a visible, concrete chief is to them a much more natural sentiment than devotion to 'undying principles' or respect for a written constitution."

[1] Cf. Pinon, R., "Chronique de la quinzaine," *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 15 décembre 1936, p. 957.

self, but at that of his ministers, that the impression is conveyed that the Throne is Tory when a Tory Government is in power, Liberal when there is a Liberal Prime Minister, and Socialist when a Labor Cabinet takes office. The King's speech at the opening of Parliament is prepared by the Cabinet. It is not his fault if he is made on one occasion to speak deprecatingly of the temper of the labor unions and six months later gently to chastise the employers . . . yet he is luckless who in England thoughtlessly lights his cigarette before the toastmaster has given the toast of 'The King!' "[1]

As an interesting contrast to the growing agnosticism and religious indifference which have spared no land, the cult of the King, in England, seems to have been decidedly on the increase, despite occasional derogatory remarks made publicly even at official functions by some extreme left M.P.'s. The process was not, it seems, seriously set back by the circumstances which led to the abdication of Edward VIII. On several occasions in the course of the reign of George V the English press and public gave way to demonstrations of loyalty to the Crown, with an emotional excess which has scarcely been surpassed by any display of French or German emotionalism under circumstances of national intoxication.

When the signing of the armistice became known, Buckingham Palace and the person of the King became the objects of a delirious outburst of popular emotion. The men who had actually conducted the war and brought it to victorious end were completely overlooked in that semi-mystic patriotic exultation of the London crowds, which centered on the King and

[1] From *England Muddles Through,* by H. E. Scarborough, New York, 1932, pp. 25, 26, 27, 29. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

his dwelling. Incidentally, this circumstance was not entirely pleasing to the then Prime Minister, Mr. David Lloyd George, a Welshman histrionically inclined but indubitably one of the British public men who contributed most to the successful issue of the war.[1] The biographer of Admiral Wemyss, the chief British representative at the armistice negotiations, relates as follows:

> "When the Armistice which entered into force in the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month had been signed at 5:10 A.M., Wemyss had telephoned the tidings to the King and the Prime Minister.
>
> "On his return next day he was immediately sent for by the King, to whom he rendered an account of his mission. . . . For days previously the approaches to the Palace, the Mall, Trafalgar Square had been thronged by expectant multitudes; when the news of the Armistice spread like wild fire on the morning of the 11th they all,

[1] "When announcing his arrival to Buckingham Palace, Wemyss had done the same to the Prime Minister and spent all that afternoon and evening awaiting a summons, but—much to his astonishment—in vain. He deemed it beyond the bounds of reason that the Prime Minister should not desire to know what had passed on so momentous an occasion, and his astonishment turned into amazement when the following day, on attending the War Cabinet, instead of the congratulations he expected, he met with black looks and an icy reception. It was only on leaving the Cabinet that he was to discover the key to this enigma.

"The Prime Minister had apparently planned a spectacular announcement of the Armistice which he hoped to make at the Guildhall Banquet on November 9th; baulked of this by the Armistice not yet being signed, he projected doing so in the House of Commons on the afternoon of the 11th—the news being meanwhile kept secret. This proved impossible after Wemyss' telephone to the King, who had announced the happy tidings to his entourage; the Armistice was accordingly made public at 11 A.M.; popular enthusiasm concentrated at Buckingham Palace—while his official statement in the House of Commons fell flat; hence his almost unconcealed fury.

"Wemyss shrugged his shoulders; the whole matter appeared to him so incredibly petty; indeed, he could hardly believe it, had it not been vouched for by two unimpeachable authorities." (Wemyss, Lady W., *The Life and Letters of Lord Webster Wemyss.*)

men, women, children, with one accord, and amidst scenes of frantic joy and indescribable enthusiasm, streamed towards Buckingham Palace to acclaim the King and the Royal Family, ovations repeated all that day and night and many subsequent ones. Never had the British nation testified so unmistakably, so ardently their devotion and loyalty to the Crown." [1]

The author of the present volume happened to be in London the winter and spring of 1929, during King George's dangerous illness, a prolonged pleurisy. The bulletins of the King's condition were announced at each news broadcast three times a day and were received with great concern by the public. Even more impressive, if possible, was the patience with which mixed groups, fairly representative of the various classes of the population, used to await, under the cold, humid winter sky, the posting of the bulletins at the main gates of Buckingham Palace. One evening when the bulletins had become more reassuring, the veteran actress Maud Adams, speaking over the radio on behalf of some charitable cause, opened her address by expressing her joy at the King's improvement, telling her invisible audience how she had danced up and down her room for ecstasy on hearing the good news.

The Silver Jubilee celebration in May, 1935, furnished an abundance of psychological documents relative to the point under consideration. The London correspondent of the New York *Times* wired to the paper on May 7, 1935:

"As was befitting in the ruler of a God-fearing people, he [the King] went first of all with Mary, his Queen, their sons, their daughter, their grandchildren and the digni-

[1] Wemyss, Lady W., *The Life and Letters of Lord Webster Wemyss*, London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1935, pp. 396 f.

taries of the realm in stately procession to the Cathedral of St. Paul's. . . .

"The rejoicing in the land over this jubilee, the respect and affection shown this most modest of gentlemen, who has been also a wise King, a good husband and a good father, not only to his immediate family, but also to his subjects throughout the vast empire, extended to high and low, rich and poor. Never in her proudest and most prosperous days has England witnessed the like of today's scenes. . . . It did not seem like sober England, this frenzy of jubilation. . . . It was almost Gallic. . . . They fainted by scores. . . . For these were the poor and often undernourished who had turned out to acclaim the King. . . .

"This 'King business' may be discredited and on its last legs elsewhere in the world, but not here . . . telegrams pouring in from throughout the British Empire tell the same story. . . . The children who have gone overseas . . . are still in the family.

"Modern progress . . . has brought its compensations . . . [the Empire is] hearing tonight the King's own voice broadcasting to his distant people almost as clearly as if he were in the family circle."

The close of the jubilee celebrations is described in an International News Service dispatch from London, May 11, as follows:

"A literal riot of patriotic fervor was staged by 250,000 loyal subjects of King George and Queen Mary tonight as the royal couple appeared on the balcony of Buckingham Palace to officially close the week's unprecedented jubilee celebrations.

"The record crowd presented one of the most amazing

displays of emotion ever seen in staid old England. As the couple appeared in what had been announced officially as their 'final' balcony appearance, pandemonium ensued.

"Hundreds were knocked down, women fainted, and children were crushed as the great mass of people surged hysterically, shrieking loyal hurrahs of 'God save the King and Queen!'

"More than 500 victims of the milling mob were treated at an ambulance station established as an emergency on the memorial steps. Twelve were hurt seriously enough to be sent to a hospital. One woman suffered several crushed ribs.

"Police and ambulance attendants were helpless in the huge crowd, unable to reach those needing medical attention for many minutes.

"The grounds adjoining the palace were packed solidly by people for many blocks. The wide highways leading to the palace and the parkways about it were jammed.

"The King and Queen remained on the balcony for seven minutes in the glare of floodlights, while crowds below shouted a steady cheer.

"The balcony appearance, bringing an end to a week's celebrations marking the twenty-fifth year of King George's rule, closed a day in which their majesties drove in royal procession to Marylebone City Hall to receive the Mayors of eight north of London boroughs.

"The steps of the great Victoria Memorial Monument, which stands before the palace, resembled a battlefield dressing station as scores of insensible men and women and children were laid out on blankets.

"Ambulances already on the scene were augmented by others which came clanging to the scene in response to

emergency calls. Attendants worked frantically, rushing many to hospitals and sending others home after treatment.

"Many husbands dragged swooning wives from the fervent crowd."

The coronation of George VI was the occasion of a renewed outburst of feeling. The British people, through a mystical communion with the Crown, reveled in the consciousness of their unity, strength, and glory.

Even though the English political instinct has found some useful social outlets for the individual's repressed emotion, those outlets are not sufficient to compensate for the inevitable psychological drawbacks attendant upon excessive suppression of emotions. One's control over one's emotions is a valuable and admirable power; but there is a price attached to it. This price usually is a certain degree of emotional impoverishment and inclination to hypocrisy.

Also on the adverse side of the scales there is, in England, a stronger touch of *tedium vitae* than perhaps anywhere else in the world. Even the English themselves notice it; this is, probably, one of the explanations of the English fondness for travel. Foreign observers, some of them neither superficial nor unfriendly, dwell on the general dullness of English daily life, and are fairly unanimous in deploring the stiffness of English manners, resulting from the stifling of emotions. Let us hear from men of such dissimilar background and temperament as Montesquieu, King Louis Philippe, and William James.

Montesquieu complains that while he easily made friends in France, in England, where he lived for two years, he was utterly unsuccessful in this respect. "You must do here as the

English do," says Montesquieu in a letter from England; "in other words, you must live by yourself, care for no one, love no one, and rely on no one. . . . The English are a people of singular genius, but they are lonesome and sad. They are reserved, live most by themselves, and to themselves they keep their thoughts. They are unhappy amidst so many reasons why they should be happy."

King Louis Philippe, in a conversation with Victor Hugo, recalled his prolonged exile in England:

> "Have you ever visited England? No? Well, when you come to England, you will find many strange things, entirely dissimilar to the French ways. You will be struck by order and cleanliness, but also by *ennui*. You will see well-pruned trees, lawns carefully mown, and you will find profound silence in the streets. Passers-by are serious and silent as ghosts. As soon as you begin talking in the street, which we are apt to do, you know, passers-by turn to have a look at you and they murmur, with an inexpressible mixture of gravity and contempt: 'The French!' This happened more than once to me as I walked with my wife and sisters and as we were, naturally, talking among ourselves; passers-by, ordinary middle-class people, would turn around and groan: 'The French!' "[1]

William James wrote in a letter from England dated June 26, 1901:

> "I am hoping to get off to Nauheim tomorrow, leaving Alice and Harry to follow a little later. I confess that the Continent 'draws' me again. I don't know whether it be the essential identity of soul that expresses itself in Eng-

[1] "Victor Hugo chez Louis-Philippe," *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 1er décembre 1929.

lish things, and makes them seem known by heart already and intellectually dead and unexciting, or whether it is the singular lack of visible *sentiment* in England, and absence of 'charm,' or the oppressive ponderosity and superfluity and prominence of the unnecessary, or what it is, but I'm blest if I ever wish to be in England again. Any continental country whatever stimulates and refreshes vastly more, in spite of so much strong picturesqueness here, and so beautiful a Nature. England is ungracious, unamiable and heavy; whilst the Continent is everywhere light and amiable and quaint, even where it is ugly, as in many elements it is in Germany."[1]

Young people, of course, sometimes revolt against the standardization of life which leads to emotional impoverishment. Such a revolt, presumably experienced by the average English youth prior to the thorough and final molding in the image of his ancestors (*mos maiorum!*), is pointedly and at times poignantly reflected in Ernest Raymond's charming works, *Tell England* and *Daphne Bruno.* His Doe, a young Englishman who became somewhat Gallicized through the reading of French novels and through association with the French during the Gallipoli campaign, in an outburst of emotion protested:

"Because they know how to live, *ces Français.* They lived deeply, and felt deeply with their lovely emotionalism. They ate and drank learnedly. They suffered, sympathized and loved, always deeply. They were *bons viveurs,* in the intensest meaning of the words. They live,

[1] *Letters of William James,* edited by Henry James, Boston, Little, Brown & Co., 1920, Vol. II, p. 152.

they live. And because of this, his spiritual home was in France. 'You English,' said he, *'vous autres Anglais,* with your d— unemotionalism, empty your lives of spiritual experience: for emotion is life, and all that's interesting in life is spiritual incident. But the French they live.' "

Hugh Walpole's Philip, looking back longingly at the days of his residence in Moscow when he could, if he felt lonely, go to the home of his friends without standing on ceremony and find comfort in talking with them, says:

"There's no one willing to be bored like that. . . . I have found some old friends—Millet, Thackeray, you'll remember—they were in Moscow two years ago. But with them is 'dinner eight o'clock sharp, old man—got an engagement nine-thirty.' So I'm lonely." [1]

Side by side with emotional impoverishment, there is another price attached to the long-continued suppression of emotions. It is an inclination to hypocrisy. As Daniel Defoe says, in the *True-Born Englishman:*

"He [the Devil] knows the genius and the inclination
And matches proper sins for every nation!"

Hypocrisy in England as elsewhere takes many different shapes, all the way from slightly exaggerated decent inhibitions down to outright inability to face or express a naked truth. The English do not have a monopoly on hypocrisy, an article so current in the human vanity fair, but undoubtedly they appear to have their own share of it. A man who is constantly on his guard against showing his true feel-

[1] Walpole, H., *The Green Mirror,* Grosset and Dunlap, 1917, pp. 66 f.

ings inevitably forms, however subconsciously, a propensity, not only for concealing his true feelings but also for showing feelings which in reality he does not have, but wishes others to believe he has. Thus he falls into what may be called emotional hypocrisy.

Avoidance of the frank expression of emotion leads also to a curious form of intellectual hypocrisy, the circumlocution so typical of English speech. The fear of the direct and appropriate term creates a sort of no-man's-land around one's thought; there is almost the feeling that any thought externalized without the drapings of circumlocution becomes obscenely naked.

This emotional complex probably has its influence also in furthering the English tendency toward vague articulation. A foreign student of the English language usually has quite a hard time in accustoming himself to the truth that the more he tries to articulate clearly or to chisel out the sounds of an English word, the more un-English his pronunciation becomes. It is said that three Englishmen had the following conversation in the compartment of a train approaching a small town: "Is this Wembley?" asked the first. "It's Thursday," replied another. "So am I," rejoined the third: "Let us get out and have a drink."

THE ACCEPTANCE OF HIERARCHY

Goethe, in the *Conversations with Eckermann,* confessed that his impressions of the incipient democratic regime on the Continent did not inspire him with much optimism. "The misfortune in the State is," said Goethe, "that nobody can enjoy life in peace, but that everybody must govern." [1] Recent

[1] New York, E. P. Dutton & Co., 1930, p. 102.

history has demonstrated similar results in successive crises—the fiasco of the Kerensky regime in Russia, the collapse of parliamentary governments in post-war Italy, the extinction of the leap-frog cabinets of the Germany of Weimar.* Were not the dictatorships in Russia, Italy, and Germany brought about essentially by a tragic inability to co-operate in a democratic organization? This incapacity was very largely due to the unfortunate fact that too many of the eligible persons in these countries wished to govern, and too few were willing to co-operate by voluntary obedience and constructive criticism.

England has been spared the costly experience of dictatorship (the rule of Cromwell as Lord Protector was not a dictatorship in the contemporary European sense) because the Englishman has in addition to his love of freedom an instinct, as it were, of hierarchy. This instinct, which is, in the last analysis, the desire for the right man in the right place, lends a great measure of stability to the English commonwealth, since this sense is possessed in almost the same degree by every social class in England.

The upper class has shown its sense of hierarchy not only through reverence for the Royal Family and homage, carefully graded, to the various degrees of the nobility; but also through a willingness to admit the right man into the right place in government, even if the place be high and the man be a mere commoner. The English aristocracy was the first to recognize, though not without much pressure from below, the necessity of admitting to the governing circles capable and ambitious commoners, and to make a practice of adopting them through the medium of knighthood, rather than turning

* For the explanation of the term *see* p. 365.

them away to become discontented revolutionary leaders of the masses. England is the country which has had the longest practice in the "circulation of the *élite*," that is, in refreshing the titled class with newcomers recruited from the rank and file. As notable recent examples there may be mentioned Mr. Philip Snowden, the son of a miner, a bookkeeper by profession, the late Viscount of Ickornshaw; also the Lord Mayor of London for 1935-36, Sir Percy Vincent, who went to London from a humble countryside home at the age of thirteen and was apprenticed in a drygoods store. Indeed, the English upper class, though not entirely free from the failings common to "vested interests," seems less in need than its social counterpart elsewhere of "a Minister of Hypnosis to change the mentality of the well-to-do." [1]

This and not a small degree of reasonableness shown by the upper class in admitting commoners, however grumblingly, to a place in the social sun—at least such commoners as it would be unsafe to turn away—finds a salutary counterpoise in the freedom of the lower classes from envious, exaggerated equalitarianism.

In England, the man in the street is in no sense lacking in self-respect, but his instinct as a mature man of action makes him aware that there are men far more capable than he is of attending to the various tasks of government; he leaves it to them to "worry about the Empire." [2] In general, he is ready to accept as his leader a better man than himself when he sees one. Friends of a political candidate in England would be very sparing in recommending him to the man in the street as merely "one of us, one of the people." A more or less subtle

[1] Woodruff, D., *Plato's Britannia,* New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1931, p. 102.

[2] Wells, H. G., *Joan and Peter,* New York, The Macmillan Company, 1918, p. 263.

suggestion that the candidate is the epitome of the average man would not do on the English hustings. Most electors would, not illogically, ask the question why *he* should be elected if he is no better than anybody else. The candidate must convince the majority that he is the best man to represent them worthily and efficiently. Superior gifts, breeding, and experience do not generally disqualify candidates, even in distinctly "proletarian" constituencies.

> "It is this, in the larger sense, immense tolerance that particularly characterizes the lower classes. Even to a lesser degree than in the middle classes do restlessness and ambition exist here. To uncounted millions of British workmen a reasonable state of things entire would consist in the enjoyment of what is, after all, a very narrow margin of safety in the economic sense. This granted, only an infinitesimal proportion would object if some eccentric millionaire should elect to bathe his lady friend in champagne, or would envy him his Rolls-Royce."[1]

The demagogue who chronically preaches discontent and envy of the well-to-do is not liked in England even by the poorer classes. The communistic paradise of supposed equality for all men in all things met in contemporary England with no more success than did the preachments of John Ball, the Kentish priest of the fourteenth century, whose doctrine was of "bolshevistic tendency, culminating in the frankly levelling doctrine . . . crystallized in the famous couplet:

> 'When Adam delved and Eve span,
> Who was then the gentleman?' "[2]

[1] From *England Muddles Through,* by H. E. Scarborough, New York, 1932, p. 71. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

[2] Wingfield-Stratford, E., *The History of British Civilization,* New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1930, pp. 262 f.

"An Englishman loves a lord," remarks F. A. Cavenagh: "One has only to look at the illustrated papers, even those intended for the masses, to realize that this somewhat harmless foible persists." [1] D. H. Lawrence's Mrs. Bolton, a district nurse and the widow of a collier killed in an accident for which the management was responsible but refused to pay just compensation, is a character true to life:

> "It was a queer mixture of feelings the woman showed as she talked. She liked the colliers, whom she had nursed for so long; but she felt very superior to them. She felt almost upper class; and at the same time a resentment against the ruling class smouldered in her. The Masters! In a dispute between masters and men, she was always for the men. But when there was no question of contest, she was pining to be superior, to be one of the upper class. The upper classes fascinated her, appealing to her peculiar English passion for superiority. She was thrilled to come to Wragby; thrilled to talk to Lady Chatterley, my word, different from the common colliers' wives! She said so in so many words. Yet one could see a grudge against the Chatterleys peep out of her; the grudge against the masters." [2]

Lady Penmore's footman who "would give notice if he had to handle Mr. Keir Hardie's tweed cap," [3] is also a character taken from life. So is Crichton, Lord Loam's butler, who heartily disapproved of his master's equalitarian tendencies, which had inspired the baronet to compel his servants to be his equals once a month by taking tea with their lordships in

[1] "The Influence of the English National Character on Educational Theory and Practice," *Internationale Zeitschrift,* 1933/34, Zweites Heft, pp. 180-181.
[2] Lawrence, D. H., *Lady Chatterley's Lover,* Nesor Publishing Co., p. 86.
[3] Briffault, R., *Europa,* New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935, p. 170.

the drawing-room. Pressed by the questions of Lady Mary, a daughter of Lord Loam, Crichton made the admission that he was deeply pained and chagrined at the levity shown in the servants' hall. After the last meeting the page-boy so far forgot himself as to address him as Crichton. Of course, for such a breach of propriety the boy was dismissed. Crichton further added that he would have been compelled to give his notice if the master had not had a seat in the Upper House. "I cling to that," [1] he said.

The Englishman's practical sense, reinforced by his sense of hierarchy, tells him that good inheritance, as proved by the sound achievements of a given family in the past, is an asset in any public servant. Hence, the characteristic English respect for the aristocracy; hence, the continuing political significance of the English nobility. The old saying, "Even a man who votes with the Whigs likes to dine with the Tories," needs today no modification beyond substituting National Labour for Whigs. A distinguished Scottish dominie of the nineteenth century said that "no man who does not add lustre to his name and pedigree should mention either." Even though aristocratic English families fall far short of this ideal, the man in the street understands that long "pedigrees of responsibilities" and old names are of national value; that more often than not *noblesse oblige*—unblemished lineage—is a reasonable guarantee of probity and devotion. Besides, the average Englishman realizes with increasing clarity that all is not smooth in the path of the nobleman; that "the religion of aristocracy demands its sacrifices," which range from exile on the frontiers of the Empire to loveless marriage; that, in short, it demands real stoicism, this "accepting without question, the

[1] Barrie, J. M., *The Admirable Crichton,* New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919, pp. 25 f.

monstrous dogma that the best things in life should be sacrificed to the bricks and mortar of a family seat." [1]

The middle class occupies in England a very strong position, and lends to the English body national a stability quite unusual in these newer times. The middle class of any nation must in the nature of things serve as backbone to the whole. On the Continent, however, even in countries free from dictatorships of demagogues, it has become a backbone considered only from the standpoint of how much it will bear without breaking. Not so in England, where the middle class is the true master of the government, a reasonable master, respectful of the upper class and not too harsh to the lower, but a master who knows his own value and power, and uses them whenever necessary. England, it seems, has come closer than any other nation of modern times, though only gradually and not without conflict, to the realization of the Aristotelian ideal of the balance of political power:

> "The legislator should always include the middle class in his government; if he makes his laws oligarchical, to the middle class let him look; if he makes them democratical, he should equally by his laws try to attach this class to the state; there only can the government ever be stable where the middle class exceeds one or both of the others, and in that case there will be no fear that the rich will unite with the poor against the rulers. For neither of them will ever be willing to serve the other, and, if they look for some form of government more suitable to both, they will find none better than this, for the rich and the poor will never consent to rule in turn, because they mistrust one another. The arbiter is always the one trusted,

[1] Lunn, A., *Family Name*, New York, The Dial Press, 1932, p. 57.

and he who is in the middle is an arbiter. The more perfect the admixture of the political elements, the more lasting will be the state. Many even of those who desire to form aristocratic governments make a mistake, not only in giving too much power to the rich, but in attempting to over-reach the people. Then comes a time when out of a false good there arises a true evil, since the encroachments of the rich are more destructive to the State than those of the people." [1]

It is interesting to note that the marked increase in popularity enjoyed by the British monarchy in recent years has been coincident with, and to a large degree caused by, the Royal Family's becoming definitely middle class—by its *embourgeoisement,* as the French call it. In the vast flood of patriotic literature of the Silver Jubilee year, many revealing documents disclose the various reasons why the average Englishman is loyal to the King and the Royal Family. The King was extolled as a husband, as a father, as a sportsman, as a philanthropist, as an English squire—the King who earned his promotions in the Royal Navy, the King who suffered as no one else could suffer in the World War, the King whose chief distinction in the bitter days of reconstruction was that he had kept his head and remembered to smile. He was represented as the perfect apotheosis of an English gentleman, whose paternal affections, by the Grace of God, embraced the uttermost reaches of his Dominions, but whose responsibilities in no way impaired his relish for a jest, a boat, or a horse. In the eyes of the English press he was the best-beloved monarch since the mythical King Arthur. Beloved, it would seem, because he was shy, because he accepted the mediocrity of kingship with

[1] *Politics,* Book IV.

such serious grace, because he was so reassuringly middle class in attainments, ambitions, virtues, and affections; as dear for what he was not, as for what he was held to be.

As we have already observed, the English sense of hierarchy has co-existed, in a remarkable manner, with a sense of self-respect and a proud, uncompromising love of liberty—religious, civil, and political. This happy psychological combination, which is of inestimable political value, has, to be sure, developed gradually; in the just words of Emerson, "they have in seven hundred years evolved the principles of freedom." But the result is the truly admirable inner political harmony which England possesses and which justifies the Englishman's claim to the title of a mature man of action. The true basis of this harmony is the inviolability of the fundamental liberties of the individual under English law—"the sacredness of the individual."

This marvel—the harmony between hierarchy and independence, between the ability to lose oneself in a collective action and the power to preserve a sound measure of individualism—is, indeed, such a very rare occurrence in the political history of mankind as to justify further emphasis even in the inevitably cursory discussion permitted by the limits of the present volume.

The King is the apex of the English State, because he so well performs the King's function as guardian of the Constitution that guarantees to the Englishman his fundamental liberties. There is nothing menial in the average man's reverence toward the King. After George V was solemnly greeted on his way to St. Paul's for the Silver Jubilee *Te Deum,* he was informally serenaded by rollicking crowds with the happy familiarity, "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow." Dickens did not hesitate to describe King John as "a miserable brute," and Henry

VIII as "a blot of blood and grease upon the History of England." The average Englishman respectfully admits to their place in the sun the royalties, the aristocracy, and the rich, but he sees that his fundamental rights to existence, to equality before the courts of law, to the inviolability of his human personality, are fully secured. In fact he is jealous of all that he understands to be his rights, great or small.

It seems one of his less agreeable peculiarities that the Englishman is as insistent about his petty rights as about his fundamental rights. The cartoonist of *Punch* took his point well in a dialogue between a drowning Briton and his would-be rescuer: "Keep your mouth shut and don't struggle." "All right, all right; who is drowning—you or me?"

Whether poor or rich, the Englishman's dwelling is his castle, and his basic personal rights are protected by common and statute law. The British criminologist can proudly say that "Great Britain is the only country in the world . . . where the police are forbidden to question accused persons after they have decided to prosecute them."[1] The prisoner is cautioned that anything he might say could be used in evidence at the trial; no "third degree" procedure is permissible. Among the old patriotic songs of various nations few seem to be as justified by history as the proud British refrain: "Britons never will be slaves."

When abroad, the individual Englishman is protected by the might of his land as only the Roman citizen was protected in the best times of the Roman Empire, when the proud declaration *Civis romanus sum* insured consideration as far as the name of Rome had traveled. The sacredness of each of His Majesty's subjects as a human individual, wherever he goes, is

[1] Thomson, Sir B., *The Story of Scotland Yard,* New York, Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1936, p. 117.

a vital link in the peculiarly English fruitful unity between the sense of hierarchy and love of liberty. This has been clearly sensed by the more penetrating foreign students of the English national character, as is illustrated by an anecdote of Marshal Foch:

> ". . . [In 1910 Henry] Wilson put the direct question to the commandant of the École Supérieure de Guerre: 'What would you say was the smallest British military force that would be of any practical assistance to you in the event of a contest such as we have been considering [Germany invading France via Belgium]?' 'One single private soldier,' responded Foch on the instant, 'and we would take good care that he was killed.' What he evidently had in mind was the moral effect upon the French troops of knowing that England was standing by them, and the certainty that, even if only a single British soldier arrived, it would insure others coming—the more so if the soldier fell."[1]

The other aspect of the Englishman's inner political harmony—his sound individualism combined with the ability to lose himself in a collective action—remains to be discussed, however briefly.

Collective action presupposes a certain degree of voluntary self-renunciation on the part of individual participants; but it can be a powerful and fertile action only when the individual members of the collectivity really have a self to renounce. The Englishman certainly has a strongly developed self, of which he is jealous, probably too jealous. In the *Fragments* of Novalis, the German poet (d. 1801), there is the much

[1] Callwell, Sir C. E., *Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson,* New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927, Vol. I, pp. 77 f.

quoted observation that "not only England, but every Englishman is an island." It was a classical remark that an Englishman made to a friend whom he invited to join the St. James Club: "I like to go to that place; they have a nice glue in the library room, and I don't know a soul there."

Patrick Balfour relates how when traveling in a remote part of Persia his car passed another car in which was an Englishman whom he knew; neither of them had the faintest idea that the other was in Persia. By way of greeting, the two Britishers bowed, smiled at each other, and passed on without stopping, just as they would have done had they been in taxicabs in Piccadilly. "Thus do Englishmen conform to type even in the wilds of Asia,"[1] pointedly remarks Mr. Balfour.

Yet when England needs the collective service of her sons and daughters, all these "incommunicable islands" become mere pegs, large or small, in the wheel. When the English Ship of State sets sail for action, everybody on board is busy, everybody knows his place and is in it, the King, Lords, Commons—a model collectivity. But as soon as the ship comes to port, the Englishman proves by every detail of his demeanor that the self-effacement and obedience practiced by him while in collective action has not impaired at all his love for independence, which is the precious source and guarantee of the great English political institutions. The following story—of which it can be said, *si non è vero, è bene trovato*—was told by a combatant in the World War:

> "Six British soldiers were incarcerated for several days in a dugout. Finally they were liberated. Two of the imprisoned Tommies were Scotsmen, and, when found, they were discussing theology. Two others were Irishmen;

[1] *Grand Tour,* New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1935, p. 89.

they were fighting. The remaining two were Englishmen and they were completely disregarding one another for the good reason that no one had introduced them." [1]

The reverse side of the English sense of hierarchy is snobbishness. The latter is much more of a social institution in England than in any other country, save perhaps in China. It must be said, however, in fairness to English snobs, that their snobberies can be divided into three not equally disagreeable types.

One variety readily takes the form of malevolent and cruelly offensive disregard for the human dignity of those who are not properly introduced, and who do not belong; this is well described in the following words of Aldous Huxley:

"But the way in which they turned to one another and continued their interrupted discussion of race horses, was so intentionally offensive that Illidge wanted to kick them." [2]

Another kind of snobbery is described by Thackeray:

". . . It seems to me that all English society is cursed by this mammoniacal superstition; and that we are sneaking and bowing and cringing on the one hand, or bullying and scorning on the other, from the lowest to the highest. My wife speaks with great circumspection—'proper pride' she calls it—to our neighbor the tradesman's lady; and she, I mean Mrs. Snob—Eliza—would give one of her eyes to go to Court, as her cousin, the Captain's wife, did. She, again, is a good soul, but it costs her agonies to be obliged to confess that we live in Upper Thompsen street, Somer's

[1] *Mental Hygiene,* March, 1930.
[2] *Point Counter Point,* New York, Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1928, p. 42.

Town. And though I believe in her heart Mrs. Whiskerington is fonder of us than of her cousins, the Smigsmags, you should hear how she goes on prattling about Lady Smigsmag,—and 'I said to Sir John, my dear John,' and about the Smigsmags' house and parties in Hyde Park Terrace." [1]

There is, however, the third kind of snobbery, which is illustrated in an incident related by Richard G. White. His seat on a train was in a first-class carriage in which he found another passenger, an English woman to whom he refers as an "angelic-beauty."

"Soon I was conscious that some persons whom I did not see were about entering the open door, when my angelic-beauty sprang from her seat, and placing herself before the door cried out, 'No, you shan't come in! I won't have third-class people in the carriage!' There was remonstrance which I did not hear and the people attempted to enter. She then threw her arm across the door-way like a bar, clasping firmly one side of the carriage with a beautiful white dimpled hand. Catherine Douglas, when she thrust her arm through the staples of the door, to keep out the pursuers of the king, could not have been more terribly in earnest. She (my Catherine Douglas) almost screamed out, 'Go back! Go back! You shan't come in! This is a first-class carriage, and I won't have third-class people put into it!'" [2]

We wonder if it is into this variety of snob that the little English girl will graduate, the one to whom *Punch* dedicated an

[1] *The Book of Snobs,* Boston, Estes and Lauriat, 1891, p. 412.

[2] White, R. G., *England Within and Without,* Boston, 1894, p. 56; used by permission of, and by arrangement with, Houghton Mifflin Co.

instructive cartoon: The little girl was being punished; she had been ordered to stand in a corner, facing the wall, and was crying. The cook entered the room and said soothingly: "Well, well, Miss Janet, and haven't you stopped crying yet?" The answer was: "I have not, Nanny. I'll ring when I have." It is, doubtless, in the defense of such snobs that George Santayana wrote his "Apology for Snobs." [1]

[1] *Soliloquies in England, cit.*, pp. 45 ff.

Chapter III

THE ANTI-INTELLECTUALIST

THE UTILITARIAN

THERE is nothing of which the average Englishman is more suspicious or contemptuous than the vagabond type of mind; the man who plays with ideas for the fun of it and, more reprehensible still, who talks as he toys with abstractions and imponderables. The English bias is for utility. Why should this be so? Is it that he is impressed—unduly impressed, it may be—with the irresistible flow of time? Do the fluent hours admonish the practical Englishman that man's duty is to act? Or is it that the Englishman is instinctively afraid of the moral poisoning that may result from thoughts unspent in action and is therefore inclined to avoid transports of thought and imagination, unless for the purpose of and in connection with activity? Or is it, perhaps, the subconscious fear that the play with ideas might lead to self-analysis and thus disturb the comfortable self-respect on which his stolid world is based?[1] Or is it more probable that the Englishman's instinct as an empire-builder impels him to distrust intellectual gymnastics? Is it that the man of action senses the truth which Anatole France has reduced to an aphorism: "He who wants to understand everything cannot build an empire"? In other words,

[1] Cf. Rosenstock, E., *Die europäisch Revolutionen,* Jena, E. Diedrichs, 1931, S. 306.

has not the Englishman instinctively felt that intellectualism may readily become an enemy to that political mysticism on which the continuity of the Empire depends?

Whatever may be the cause, the effect is clear; it is the Englishman's "impious skepticism of theory."[1]

George Bourne records that a Surrey peasant of his acquaintance defined learning as "knowing how to do things." The peasant knew nothing of Carlyle, but, as the annalist observes, "It is substantially Carlyle's doctrine that he advocates; he admires efficiency."[2] It may be added that this Surrey peasant is an intellectual brother of Francis Bacon and John Locke, probably the most representative English philosophers.

It is more than a mere accident of history that in England the first stir of intellectual curiosity and independent thinking of the later Middle Ages inspired the work of Roger Bacon, *doctor mirabilis,* who, in opposition to the medieval fondness for the method of deduction and for explanation on the basis of authority, reverted to the method of induction, fruitfully applied by the ancients to the natural sciences. When the lusty freedom of the Renaissance invaded the realm of European philosophy, another Englishman, also a Bacon, expounded fully in the *Novum organum,* the inductive method, which, proceeding from the individual to the general, conditions truth by facts.

This practical and typically English mind-set found its further fruition in the philosophy of John Locke, who extolled the experience of the senses as the foundation of dependable knowledge. He was a superlatively utilitarian thinker, averse

[1] Emerson, R. W., *English Traits,* Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1888, p. 83.

[2] *The Bettesworth Book: Talks with a Surrey Peasant,* London, Duckworth and Co., 1910, p. 279.

to intellectualism in the Continental meaning of the term, that is, to thinking and arguing as mere intellectual sport.

> "As he always kept the useful in his eye, in all his disquisitions he esteemed the employment of men only in proportion to the good they were capable of producing; for which reason he had no great value for those critics or mere grammarians, that waste their lives in comparing words and phrases. . . . Mr. Locke also disliked those authors that labour only to destroy, without establishing anything themselves. 'A building,' said he, 'displeases them. They find great faults in it; let them demolish it, and welcome, provided they endeavour to raise another in its place, if it be possible.'" [1]

ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM OF THE PRACTICAL ENGLISHMAN

English anti-intellectualism presents, as might be expected, some positive, some neutral, and some negative aspects. On the positive side of the balance sheet there is the sound utilitarian desire to employ thinking power for practical and constructive ends; there is also the development of an intuitive effort toward comprehending the imponderables of men's character. On the negative side may be noted the distrust of the "brainy" fellow and the exaggerated, "impious skepticism of theory." Between these two manifestations, the positive and the negative, there stands what may be called the anti-intellectual trifling of the English mind. This "neutral" anti-intellectualism consists in reluctance to explain an accepted

[1] From *John Locke,* by Thomas Fowler, New York, 1906, pp. 42-43. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers; *The Works of John Locke,* Vol. X, pp. 162-174.

course of action or events, a nationally accepted attitude of mind. The positive aspects of anti-intellectualism, or such as are on the whole more positive than negative, will first engage our attention.

The generally disapproving attitude of the English with regard to purely intellectual discussion in conversation or in writing is often wrongly interpreted by the Continentals.

What is taken by more than one Continental intellectual for dullness or sluggish stupidity, may prove, in the long run, an instance of wholesome utilitarianism. The Englishman who says so little is not lightly moved by specious arguments. While keeping his own counsel, he cannily weighs the implications of others. The English have long maintained a sound empirical skepticism toward the magic formulas of political and economic utopias.

Similarly, the theological and philosophical apathies of the English have led to false interpretations. When the English politician or man of letters shows a lack of interest in clever but barren criticism, it is unfair to dismiss his attitude as one of sterile anti-intellectualism. It may prove another instance of common sense and sound aversion to false intellectualism and verbose banter. The philosophy of such an attitude of mind is well presented in the following reflection found in the diary of Henri Frédéric Amiel, the liberal Swiss thinker:

> "How maleficent, contagious and unwholesome is the eternal smile of the indifferent critic, the heartless and corrosive mockery that chaffs and demolishes everything, takes no interest in any personal duty or in any vulnerable affection, and, without caring to act, cares only to understand! To me, this ironical contemplation is immoral, like Pharisaism, for it does not preach by example and it

imposes upon others the burdens that it rejects for itself. It is insolent, for it feigns knowledge, while it has only doubt. It is deadly, for its Voltairean laugh dispels courage, faith and ardour in those who still possess them,—

"Rire de singe assis sur la destruction,[1] as Alfred de Musset says. Criticism that has become a routine, a mere habit and system means the abolition of moral energy, faith and all strength. . . . This order of mind . . . is very dangerous, for it pampers every bad instinct, indiscipline, irreverence, selfish individualism, and it ends in social atomism. . . . Woe if negation rules, for life is an affirmation." [2]

Amidst the demagogic hysteria of panaceas which is prevalent in the world at large, the refusal of the English public to be fascinated by millennial doctrines, however well-worded, to be swept off their feet by phrases, however grandiloquent, is among the most valuable safeguards of civilization. Henry W. Nevinson has aptly expressed it:

"The words Liberty, Equality, Fraternity are too abstract for the Englishman's mind. He applauds them, just as he may applaud the Russian ballet or French fashions for women, but they are foreign to his nature. We would fight for Liberty, but we much prefer to call it Freedom, as implying something more solid and tangible. We think Fraternity too soft and affected a sort of thing. When the Englishman receives a letter signed 'Yours fraternally,' he suspects a tiresome crank. And as to Equality, I fear that all Bernard Shaw's knowledge, acumen, and superb

[1] The laugh of an ape, perched on destruction.

[2] From *The Private Journal of Henri F. Amiel,* New York, 1935, pp. 168 f. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

idealism, as displayed in the *Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism,* will pass over the heads of the English people as something impracticable and foreign." [1]

England certainly has to her credit the work of her disinterested, non-utilitarian scholars, men of letters, and artists. The compliment paid to England by the great Renaissance leader, Erasmus, in a letter still holds true:

"The men are sensible and intelligent. Many of them are even learned and not superficially either. They know their classics. . . . When Colet speaks, I might be listening to Plato. Linacre is as deep and acute a thinker as I have ever met with. Grocyn is a mine of knowledge."

Yet it is also true that it is the practical scientist who enjoys real popularity and respect in England. The non-utilitarian studies enjoy a much smaller measure of popular encouragement and recognition there than perhaps in any other European country. England has had her utopian dreamers and her crusaders for lost causes. At the same time she has had the luck of possessing intellectuals who, while promoting science and the arts, remained free from the reproach addressed by Confucius to one of his disciples: "Don't be a fool, when you try to be a great scholar."

On the other hand, though England has given to the world a fair share of men who "sitting by their studious lamps" employed their superior gifts in a disinterested search for truth whether scientific or philosophical or aesthetic, meditative and erudite minds are by no means as highly appreciated by the general public in England as they are in France, and were,

[1] *The English,* London, George Routledge and Sons, 1929, p. 91.

until recently, in Germany. English national universities exercise little influence on the conduct of public affairs.

Poets and speculative philosophers, and, indeed, all those whose interests are divorced from the practical affairs of life, are held more or less under suspicion in England and cannot hope to receive adequate recognition. England has her poet laureate, but he is never taken seriously. The attitude of the unalloyed "regular" Britisher in respect to poetry is well reflected in the remark of a character of Waugh's *Loom of Youth:* "Oh, poetry, that's all right for Claremont and asses like that, but what's the use of it?"[1] It may be remembered that Shelley's mother, who "liked a man to be a fighter," would "watch with disgust her eldest son go off into the woods carrying a book under his arm instead of a gun."[2]

"The great end of life is not knowledge, but action," declared T. H. Huxley in his *Technical Education.* To the Englishman's mind, the really respectable and worth-while knowledge is that which can serve as a reliable guide for action, in other words, the exact knowledge of which the mathematical and natural sciences are capable; hence, England has become an international nursery for the popularization of scientific studies. The Englishman's fondness for the sciences is not free from a certain degree of contradiction to his conservatism, because the sciences have been among the most powerful sources of economic, social, and political changes, which are concomitant with every new industrial revolution.

It is interesting also to note how Aldous Huxley's love of exact science triumphs, at times, over his artistic sense. Factual information of all kinds being one of his ambitions, and

[1] London, Cassell & Co., 1929, p. 153.

[2] Maurois, A., *Ariel: The Life of Shelley,* New York, D. Appleton and Co., 1924, p. 11.

the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* his favorite reading, accompanying him, we are told, even on pleasure trips, Mr. Huxley cannot resist the temptation to share his learning with his readers in improbable and artistically dubious passages in his novels, like the one in *Point Counter Point,* where Marjorie, bitter at her pregnancy and the prospect of becoming the mother of an illegitimate child, is made to think of her baby in terms of the biological evolution of man, developing from the stage of a single cell through that of a worm and then a fish to the status of the mammal foetus. This tendency of Mr. Huxley's is perhaps a result of the Briton's desire to justify his scholarship by service to his readers and of the wish thus to square his avid intellectual curiosity with the condemnation of theoretical knowledge when divorced from life and service. One of his favorite minor themes, this is presented with an especially strong touch of feeling in the Helen-Hugh kissing episode of *Eyeless in Gaza,* where Mr. Huxley finds occasion to denounce at length "Higher Lifers," unpractical and aloof "pure" scholars, philosophers, and men of science, as "Higher Shirkers." [2]

The Englishman's utilitarian interest in and respect for exact knowledge seems to be much more an asset than a liability; it does not seriously interfere with the average Englishman's traditional loyalties, religious or otherwise, even though these loyalties be inexplicable in terms of the exact sciences.

Among various positive manifestations of English utilitarianism, there is one which seems particularly an English quality—the intense, though discreet, interest in human nature. The English have developed, almost to a mysterious

[1] *Op. cit.,* p. 205.

[2] Cf. Huxley, A., *Eyeless in Gaza,* New York, Harper & Brothers, 1936, pp. 171-173, 186.

intuition, their ability to judge character. Hence the unusual record of integrity shown by English courts and administration. The English people, through the already long history of their enjoyment of the franchise, have made practically no serious errors with relation to the character of the men to whom they have entrusted the care of national interests. "I make no claims to great knowledge, but I am a good judge of horses and men," Lord Bentinck used to say. The majority of British statesmen charged with the heavy duty of naming appointments for the Crown, before and since Lord Bentinck's time, have proved their knowledge of men; the English nation has to its credit a higher record of diligence and integrity in the conduct of national affairs than have other Great Powers.

"NEUTRAL" ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM: GENUINE AND INSINCERE

The "'neutral" anti-intellectualism of the English is genuine whenever it consists in a reluctance to explain something that has already been accomplished. On the other hand, it is mere intellectual trifling, not unassociated with intellectual hypocrisy, when the English pretend that, as a nation they have always been hopelessly and helplessly illogical, especially in their dealings with the outside world, because such is their inborn, incurable way of doing things. Nothing in history obliges us to take Dean Inge seriously when he asserts: "We are honest but dull and stupid, for which reason we are frequently outwitted by the nimbler intellect of our rivals."[1] History obliges us to agree not with the distinguished clergyman but with his German acquaintance, who indignantly said:

[1] *England,* New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926, p. 40.

"Why do you English look such fools? You deceive us completely!" [1]

Genuine "neutral" anti-intellectualism has manifested itself, for example, in the fact that the English as a political commonwealth do not have any theory of themselves. Indeed, the French scholar De Tocqueville [2] was justified, in a sense, in declaring that the English Constitution does not really exist. The English do not possess one authoritative document to embody the principles underlying the fundamental political institutions of England. It may be observed, however, that, while for some nations their written constitutions exist practically on paper only, the "non-existent" English constitution functions efficiently and makes of England a rare place, where a man enjoys the fullest degree of protection combined with the highest degree of personal freedom.

Disbelieving in universal and absolute panaceas, the English have shown themselves capable of necessary changes in the face of national crises and under the pressure of economic and social readjustment. Opposed by temperament to sweeping revolutionary doctrines, the English, as A. Lawrence Lowell has observed, have built a remarkable political system, which "has grown up by a continual series of adaptations to existing needs. This very fact has made it on the whole more consistent with itself, has brought each part more into harmony with the rest, than is the case in any other government." [3] In this sense it may be maintained that their fundamental institutions were never planned. As a character of Mr. H. G. Wells's declares:

[1] *More Lay Thoughts of a Dean,* New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1932, p. 297.

[2] *La Démocratie en Amérique,* I, vi.

[3] Lowell, A. L., *The Government of England,* New York, The Macmillan Company, 1912, Vol. I, p. 14.

"Nobody planned the British estate system; nobody planned the confounded Constitution. It came about, it was like layer after layer wrapping around an agate, but you see it came about so happily in a way, it so suited the climate and the temperament of our people and our island; it was on the whole so cozy that our people settled down into it." [1]

A few other interesting examples of the reluctance of the Englishman to announce in elaborate theories what he intends to do, and his still greater reluctance to explain what he has already done, may be cited. It was the English political genius that perfected the parliamentary form of government, but it took a Frenchman to crystallize the great tenets of British political philosophy and define the basic principle of the separation of powers—legislative, judiciary, and executive. The Englishman had applied this principle for more than a century before Montesquieu defined it in his *Esprit des Lois* of 1748. In spite of the excellence of their judicial system, the English have never produced a single guide for the administration of justice comparable to the celebrated *Code Napoléon*. Tennyson said:

"It is the land that freemen till,
That sober-suited Freedom chose,
That land where girt with friends or foes
A man may speak the thing he will;

"A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where Freedom slowly broadens down
From precedent to precedent."

[1] *Mr. Britling Sees It Through*, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1917, p. 32.

After the dedication of generations of statesmen to the policy of free trade, high officials of the British Foreign Office received as a revelation an interpretation of the effect of England's free trade policy upon her international situation, written in 1907:

> "Second only to the ideal of independence, nations have always cherished the right of free intercourse and trade in the world's market and in proportion as England champions the principle of the largest measure of general freedom of commerce she undoubtedly strengthens, increases her hold on the interested friendship of other nations at least to the extent of making them feel less apprehensive of naval supremacy in the hands of a free-trade England than they would in the face of a predominant protectionist power. This is an aspect of the free trade question which is apt to be overlooked. It has been well said that every country if it had the option would, of course, prefer itself to hold the power of supremacy at sea but that this choice being excluded it would rather see England hold that power than any other state." [1]

Seven hundred years after the establishment of the University of Oxford, we read:

> "There is no person or body in Oxford competent to declare what the functions of the university are. Among individuals the conception thereof differs immensely. . . . Oxford has never felt the necessity of declaring its purpose because it has always found that purpose in its

[1] "Memorandum by Mr. [later Sir] Eyre Crowe [at the time Senior Clerk, Foreign Office] on the Present Status of British Relations with France and Germany, January 1, 1907," *British Documents on the Origins of the War, cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 397-420, esp. pp. 403, 420.

own traditions, moulded slowly by the pressure of economic and social revolutions." [1]

Side by side with such instances of genuine neutral utilitarian anti-intellectualism, there can be observed in the history of the English nation, as well as in the daily conduct of individual Englishmen, not less significant cases of pretended anti-intellectualism.

When an Englishman rises in Parliament to make a major address, he almost invariably makes a point of fumbling and stumbling at the beginning. Small wonder that he is given to such insincere intellectual acrobatics. In his student days he was careful to pretend, in accordance with the accepted code, that he never bent himself to serious study. The English schoolboy must swagger out a failure and roundly apologize for a *first;* so the English statesman deliberately conceals the hard thinking and studious preparation which he puts into a piece of intellectual work, preferring to present it as the result of mere idle though talented inspiration. An attentive student of English national character has observed:

"Often I have been present, usually a silent dissenter, whilst the 'stupid Englishman' was torn to pieces in a friendly way. His slowness, his lack of enterprise, his dullness, his 'stodginess' have been noted by Americans, Canadians, Irish, Scottish or Australian critics. I thought: 'Yes, curiously, these stupid, unimaginative people have done the biggest things ever recorded in history.' The Englishman would not say that for himself. . . . He delights to represent his country as always going to the dogs. He growls at his own characteristics, partly because the love of a civil growl is inherent in the English tempera-

[1] *The Government of Oxford,* Oxford University Press, 1931, p. 63.

ment as is illustrated by Pinero's definition of the ideal club secretary as 'one who gives members every excuse but no reason to grumble.'" [1]

The Englishman, when his interests demand it, plays to perfection illogicalness and muddleheadedness. Mr. Bernard Shaw, in *Saint Joan,* puts into the mouth of Charles the following quite unhistorical statement: "If we can only have a treaty, the English are sure to have the worst of it, because they are better at fighting than at thinking." [2] In the course of history the French have learned, at their own expense, to know the ability of the English as diplomats. It may be mentioned that during the peace negotiations at Versailles the English delegates showed impatience with clear-cut arguments of the French, when the particularly lucid French logic threatened to become unprofitable to the English. One of their diplomats wrote to a friend back in London: "The 'Latins' with their clarity easily irritate me; I prefer our muddled, non-intellectual, heavy, and hum-drum manner of seeing things." [3]

It was a round case of hypocrisy when Cromwell declared that never can man be at a greater height of his manly activity than when he does not know where he is going.[4] At all events the subsequent encirclement of the world's seas with English-owned or "leased" straits, naval bases, and coaling stations, and the creation of the newest English imperial superstructure, the "vertical African Empire" from the Cape to Cairo—to mention a few examples among many—have certainly not come about entirely "like layer after layer wrapping around

[1] Fox, F., *The English (1909-1922)*, New York, E. P. Dutton & Co., 1923, pp. 92 f.
[2] New York, Brentano's, 1924, p. 42.
[3] Nicolson, H., "Lorsqu'on préparait la paix," *Revue de Paris,* 15 septembre 1935, p. 281.
[4] Rosenstock, E., *Die europäisch Revolutionen, cit.,* S. 306.

an agate." Even though it is true that nobody planned the British estate system and nobody planned the Constitution, it is not true that the English, as they are inclined to pretend, simply tumbled into an empire, casually conquered for the mother country by her restless younger sons, who, under the law of primogeniture, were forced to seek fortune overseas.

It is also intellectual dalliance when the Englishman pretends that the English simply "muddle through" the most trying crises, such as a modern war, with practically no organization, just by the sheer genius for blundering to victory.

Everyone who has resided in England knows that the English police system and the judiciary are among the most efficient and best organized in the world. Every intelligent Englishman also knows this, of course, and is legitimately proud of his country, as probably surpassing the rest of the world with regard to police protection and the administration of justice. Similarly, the English soldier did not exaggerate when he wrote from the front:

> "Really I think the British postal arrangement out here one of the most remarkable features of the war. The organization behind our lines is quite extraordinary. Right here on the firing line itself we get our letters and parcels every day. In the midst of quite a considerable bombardment I have seen fellows in artillery shelters in the line, reading letters and opening parcels of little luxuries received from home." [1]

The English may be averse to political formulas, but they have certainly never failed to remember the one coined by Lord Bacon: "This much is certain: that he that commands

[1] *The Forum, cit.*, Vol. 56, p. 412.

the sea is at great liberty, and may take as much and as little of the war as he will." [1]

The Monseigneur Cauchon of Shaw's *Saint Joan* may be right with regard to English theologians when he says, "The thick air of your country does not breed theologians." [2] But in that thick air the doctrines or dogmas of the Foreign Office have been elaborated with fine and subtle logic, and have been carried out with an impressive consistency and continuity. "The route to India," justly remarks M. A. Tomazi, in a recent article published by *Miroir du Monde,* "is the masterpiece of British political genius. Gibraltar, Malta, Aden, and the Suez Canal are the great landmarks of the route, all strategic points which, between Liverpool and Bombay, are controlled by Great Britain. This route continues eastward, through Colombo, Singapore and Hongkong."

Consider, for example, how well-thought-out and carefully assembled is the Mediterranean aspect of the "life-line" of the British Empire, those strategic corner stones on which English imperialism has succeeded in building the greatest empire yet seen by history. The initial link of the Mediterranean chain, Gibraltar, was taken and fortified by 1704. By the end of the century England got hold of Corsica. Forced to give this island up, she acquired Malta in 1800, and still holds it. At the Congress of Berlin, in 1878, she presented herself, at the expense of the Turk, with the island of Cyprus, another strategic watch-tower and naval station in the eastern Mediterranean. In 1881 England occupied Egypt "to protect the khedive," and by 1897 extended her "protection" to include the Egyptian Sudan. In 1904, profiting by the embarrassment of

[1] *Essays: Of Expense.*

[2] New York, Brentano's, 1924, p. 71.

France's ally, Russia, an embarrassment created by the Japanese not without encouragement from England, she brought the French virtually to acquiesce in English dominance in the Mediterranean Sea.

As a result of the World War, England acquired control of the strategically important parts of the eastern coast of the Mediterranean and of the hinterland—Palestine, Hedjaz, Mesopotamia; a pan-Arabic railway, the Cairo-Bagdad, has since been built and the port of Haifa transformed into a first-class military harbor and made the terminus of the Mosul oil pipeline. The growth in the importance of aerial communication was met in the Mediterranean area of the British Empire's "life-line," by adding to the existing naval bases a worthy and well-devised counterpart—the Cairo-Palestine-Basra-Bouchir-Karachi air-line, which is linked up with the Euro-Africa British air-line. The possible menace to the British position in the Mediterranean as a result of the conquest of Ethiopia by Italy, in spite of the British diplomatic offensive, has been rapidly met, in part at least, by the strengthening of the round-Africa line of communication and by a new agreement with Egypt.

The following analysis of England's post-war foreign policies written by a well-informed Englishman may be cited as dependable testimony:

> "It is merely to restate a truism to point out that British foreign policy for at least ten years has been essentially directed toward the maintenance of peace. Certain matters may from time to time have seemed to consort oddly with such an aim, but this is a matter of interpretation. Great Britain stands to gain a great deal from the exist-

ence of settled trading conditions and to lose a great deal whenever war breaks out anywhere. There is the further condition, sensed if not explicitly thought out, that the present organization of society could scarcely stand the strain of another major conflict. One more such victory as that of 1918 might be fatal.

"Subject to this limitation, British diplomacy has pursued two main objectives. One is quite definitely the maintenance of good relations with the United States. The other is the prevention of the creation of a Continental hegemony by any single nation; and this necessarily has given British policy a fundamentally anti-French and anti-Russian trend. Now and again there crop up incidents which seem to indicate tendencies exactly the opposite of those emphasized above, but in the long run these minor variations in the graph flatten out into insignificance. . . .

"Examined in the light of the aims just suggested, British post-war diplomacy is seen to have pursued a perfectly consistent cause. For two or three years following 1918 it was difficult to determine how the nations were going to align themselves, and Whitehall marked time. By the end of 1921 what the British took to be the outlines of the post-war structure began to appear, and British policy to be shaped accordingly. . . .

"In the foreign, as in the domestic, field, the party labels affixed to the Cabinets have meant comparatively little. The French found Lord Curzon and Mr. Snowden equally annoying. Mr. MacDonald had to remonstrate with Moscow just as sharply as did his conservative predecessors. . . . Among the rank and file of the British nation there are, of course, chauvinists and pacifists, isolationists and

co-operators, pro-Leaguers and anti-Leaguers, pro-American and anti-American. . . ." [1]

THE PRICE OF ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM

Side by side with the positive and neutral aspects of anti-intellectualism,[2] there are certain distinctly negative aspects which must be noted. Its anti-intellectualism is at one and the same time a vital part of the armor of the English nation, a curious excrescence on that armor, and a corrosive, which is capable of biting deep into its traditional defenses.

It appears that it is precisely in English anti-intellectualism that the source of certain far-reaching weaknesses of the English national character is to be found, more important weaknesses than those concomitant to any other English national trait already studied in this volume. Therefore, in addition

[1] From *England Muddles Through,* by H. E. Scarborough, New York, 1932, pp. 242 ff. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

[2] Cf. the following description of English anti-intellectualism found in Matthew Arnold's *Essays in Criticism,* "Heinrich Heine," New York, A. L. Burt Co., s.d. 1st and 2nd series, p. 121:

"In truth, the English, profoundly as they have modified the old Middle-Age order, great as is the liberty which they have secured for themselves, have in all their changes proceeded, to use a familiar expression, by the rule of thumb; what was intolerably inconvenient to them they have suppressed, and as they have suppressed it, not because it was irrational, but because it was practically inconvenient, they have seldom in suppressing it appealed to reason, but always, if possible, to some precedent, or form, or letter, which served as a convenient instrument for their purpose, and which saved them from the necessity of recurring to general principles. They have thus become, in a certain sense, of all people the most inaccessible to ideas and the most impatient of them; inaccessible to them, because of their want of familiarity with them; and impatient of them because they have got on so well without them, that they despise those who, not having got on as well as themselves, still make a fuss for what they themselves have done so well without. But there has certainly followed from hence, in this country, somewhat of a general depression of pure intelligence: Philistia has come to be thought by us the pure Land of Promise, and it is anything but that; the born lover of ideas, the born hater of commonplaces, must feel in this country, that the sky over his head is of brass and iron."

to the positive and the neutral implications of English anti-intellectualism, we shall now study the negative implications, always bearing in mind that our primary interest is in international political repercussions of national strength or weakness.

It is scarcely a wholesome phenomenon that popular dislike readily falls, as it does in England, upon any public man who is tarred by the syndicated newspapers as "brainy," or as "high-brow." In relatively quiet times, it may be good British conservatism to insist that cabinets be formed of undynamic, "safe rather than brilliant" men—men who are "tranquillity" and "extraordinary normality" personified. But in times of ceaseless complex world conflicts, open or covert, it is vital that Parliament and the Cabinet should have in service an adequate number of keen, quick-thinking, widely informed men —men who are prepared to take responsibilities, inclusive of reasonable risks. During the last quarter of a century, characterized by unprecedented political and economic complexity, England has persisted in placing at the wheel of the State the "tranquil" men, who pride themselves on not being "clever," and in avoiding uncomfortably brilliant individuals among her public men. Viscount Cecil's idea that it is better to have for leaders "safe" second-class brains than second-class characters is unsafe in these days of complex struggle and conflict, domestic and international. Nations run serious risks when they do not find and foster leaders combining first-rate brain and first-class character, nor bring men and women possessing this happy combination to leadership and power.

British leadership in the world has not been in the recent decades, for better or worse, commensurate with the potential power of the Empire. In their impious skepticism with regard to theory and the theorists, the English seem to have

overlooked the fact that side by side with useless prattling, futile daydreaming, and destructive, irresponsible criticism of everybody and everything, *theory* can have another, more wholesome meaning; *theory,* in the sense of mental experimentation on the basis of a crystallized experience. The English have a saying that trouble is in store for the world when a fellow with a theory is born; on the other hand, national leadership impervious to theory, to take the term in its positive sense, can readily become a greater evil.

Not only intellectualism, but also anti-intellectualism can be false and harmful. In the turmoil of the recent decades, when sound and truly enlightened statesmanship was so badly needed, her false anti-intellectualism appears to have caused England an incalculable injury. The destructive force of this anti-intellectualism has operated in two directions: (A) inability to establish a non-political and non-commercial basis of understanding and attraction between England and the dominant worth-while native element of her vast estates; (B) inability or disinclination to crystallize and popularize the complex political, economic, and military experience to which the Empire is heir, aggravated by incapacity for mental experimentation in the challenging field of international politics. Bearing in mind that England holds no monopoly in such shortcomings, we shall now briefly illustrate these two negative aspects of her anti-intellectual bias with a few examples drawn from recent history.

As in the case of business relations between individuals, the relations between collective individuals, or nations, are more satisfactory when there is a certain sharing of tastes, appreciations, and various other common human interests. Such community of human interests may be either intellectual or emotional, or both. The French, though on the whole less efficient

colonial administrators than the English, are indubitably strengthening their hold on their principal colonies, on which they center their effort. This success is very largely due to the intellectual charm that French culture exercises on the *élite* of the natives, who, once they have really assimilated French civilization, are spiritually adopted, so to speak, by the French as good Frenchmen, regardless of color or creed. Moreover, in foreign countries standing entirely outside their sphere of political and economic influence, the French have many friends among the modern humanists. The English, intellectually incurious and emotionally reserved, do not have the talent possessed by the French for befriending peoples of other nations and races. Even in the British Isles themselves, they have failed to achieve anything like the amalgamation that has fused one solid French nation out of Gauls, Franks, Burgundians, and diverse immigrants from all countries.

A visitor to India made this observation with relation to English administration of India:

> "The English are, in themselves, a proof against Darwinism: they do not adapt themselves, and they survive just the same. The official newspaper, published in English, devotes twenty pages to horse races, and half a page to social policies. The official brain apportions its interests similarly."[1]

It is for history to disclose whether England, despite the lack of proper intellectual adaptation to the conditions created by the complexities of modern times, will continue to maintain her imperial position. What a contemporary student of England can see is that she did lose in international prestige dur-

[1] Katz, R., *Une Année en Extrême Orient,* Paris, Editions Montaigne, pp. 41-42.

ing the supreme trial of the World War, and, logically enough, has continued to lose ground during the aftermath. The potentially invincible British Empire proved to be but one of the empires which the Germans, poorly supported by ineffectual allies, almost defeated; and in the aftermath of the World War, England more often than not failed to play a leading part on the stage of world politics. Recent history seems, indeed, to uphold with relation to both cause and effect Oswald Sydenham's condemnation of that conception of British imperialism which he defines as "this dream of defying the world without an army, and dominating it without education." [1]

The Englishman's utilitarian bias and his lack of intellectual curiosity produce, among other consequences, that strange combination of superiority and inferiority complexes which arise in his dealings with persons of a foreign nationality.

The average Englishman is distrustful of foreigners because he does not know their language or their civilization; he is contemptuous of foreigners, in part at least, because he rationalizes his own unpardonable ignorance of foreign lands. His ignorance of foreign countries, though it prevents John Bull from granting them full human worth, does not prevent him from judging them roundly.

A French student of England once remarked that he was amazed by what the Englishman did not know. To be sure, the Englishman knows a great many things which his common sense suggests to him and in which his foreign critics may be weak. Yet his lack of curiosity with regard to matters whose utility he does not see is indeed appalling, in small things or great. For instance, a British naval officer, an ex-

[1] Wells, H. G., *Joan and Peter*, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1918, p. 279.

cellent seaman and brilliant commander in the World War, writes of the naming of his "mystery ship," an armed decoy for German submarines camouflaged as a tramp freighter—one of the so-called "Q" ships—as follows:

> "By a curious coincidence we had trouble again about the secrecy of our name. The 'Q' title had by this time been dropped, and we just had a name. On the ship being taken up, her name had been changed from the *Victoria* to the *Snail*. This latter name became compromised while we were fitting out, and we eventually sailed under the name of the *Pargust*. Who thought of the name or what it means I have never discovered." [1]

Incurious of their own belongings, save the gray-with-age relics of English history, unless and until they see their practical value, the English, naturally, are still more so with regard to foreign matters; they do not know how to cultivate the seed of common disinterested human interests—interests which mitigate, if not neutralize, the disruptive influence of international conflicts, of open or "unofficial" wars. A French ambassador relates in his memoirs how an English colleague, having received appointment to Rome, came to him to ask for information about Italy:

> "I thought that he wanted to know about Italian politics, parties, and individual leaders, in the past and at present. He confessed, however, that what he wanted to know above all was about the city itself. 'Don't you know it already?' I asked in astonishment. 'Hardly,' he answered. 'How is this possible, when you have been in the Orient

[1] From *My Mystery Ships*, by Vice Admiral Gordon Campbell, p. 216, copyright 1928, 1929, reprinted with permission by Doubleday, Doran and Co., Inc., New York.

for a long time and must have passed through Rome so often?' 'That's right. But I was already so tired by travel each time I passed through Rome that I would go directly from the station to an hotel, and would not leave it until the time for taking my train to continue the journey.'" [1]

In 1497 Andrea Trevisano, Venetian ambassador to England, wrote of John Bull's insularity:

"The English are great lovers of themselves and of everything belonging to them. . . . They think there are no other men like themselves and no other world but England. . . ."

The four and a half centuries that separate us from Trevisano's England have made little change with regard to the average Englishman's voluntary, not to say willful, ignorance of other countries, their language, history, vital interests, and true national characteristics. In 1934 Sir Percival Phillips, correspondent of the *Daily Mail,* thought it advisable to write out a number of "Don'ts" for the enlightenment of his fellow Englishmen intending to travel on the Continent:

"Don't cross the Channel with a superiority complex. Civilization does not end at Calais, and our Continental neighbors resent the inference that they should be classed with the inhabitants of the African hinterland. Take things as they come and do not grouse.

"Don't call attention constantly to the fact that you are being robbed because prices in a gold standard country are higher than at home. Such comparisons merely advertise your ignorance without having the slightest influence on the franc or the guilder.

[1] Benoist, C., "Guillaume II en Hollande," *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 15 janvier 1934, pp. 393-394.

"Don't comment loudly on the manners and appearance of the people around you. English is not an entirely unknown tongue even in Central Europe. . . .

"Don't imagine that your slight knowledge of a foreign language is improved by raising your voice. You only increase the bewilderment of the natives." [1]

How does this superiority complex develop? That very intimate mental process is not easy to grasp. Mr. Priestley relates how his little daughter said to her parents one day during a visit to France, "But French people aren't true, are they?" "I knew exactly how she felt," comments Mr. Priestley.[2]

While in other lands a good percentage of the adolescents of superior gifts or simply of sufficient means assiduously study foreign languages as the only sure key to familiarity with foreign civilizations, English adolescents of corresponding gifts or means give very little attention to "the idioms used by foreigners." As a result, in the course of the World War the Germans had various advantages over their English foes, not the least of which was their command of language. This they successfully applied in espionage and propaganda. The English were seriously handicapped by their meager linguistic resources, not only as individuals but also as a nation.

For example, a German spy organization operated from Denmark a rather important surveillance of the movements of English naval and merchant marine units. When the English Intelligence Service sought to combat the German Intelligence Service in Denmark, profiting by the visit of a large British squadron to Skagen, it was found that "of the 18,000

[1] New York *Times,* November 11, 1934.

[2] Priestley, J. B., *English Journey,* New York, Harper & Brothers, 1934, p. 416.

officers and sailors who manned the squadron not one spoke Danish."[1] When the London Office of the Intelligence Service was on a lookout for eligible Englishmen who could speak Flemish, it was discovered that such individuals were "as scarce as hen's teeth."[2] Similar was the discovery made by the head of the English Intelligence Service in Holland, who badly needed an officer who spoke French, German, and Dutch.[3]

This sad situation was not an accident but the result of a long tradition. In a public lecture, Coleridge gave thanks to God "that he had been protected from the ability to speak a single sentence in the French language."[4] Taine relates an interesting story illustrating the horror of foreign tongues that a typical true-born Englishman carries in his heart:

> "Lord A., having engaged a French tutor, advised him not to speak anything but French to his children. 'I am charmed, my lord, to find that you lay such store on our tongue.' 'Sir, we despise it, but we wish that in France our children should know how to speak as well as the natives.' "[5]

Bishop Creighton once remarked: "An Oxford man walks as if all the world belonged to him. A Cambridge man walks as if he did not care a damn to whom the world belonged." The average product of either still has poor linguistic equipment and limited knowledge of the world at large, because

[1] Steinhauser, G., *Le Détective du Kaiser,* Paris, Editions Montaigne, 1933, pp. 97-98.
[2] Rowan, R. W., *Modern Spies Tell Their Stories,* New York, Robert McBride and Co., 1934, p. 288.
[3] Landau, H., *All Is Fair: The Story of the British Secret Service Behind the German Lines,* New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1934, pp. 41-42.
[4] Quoted in Dixon, W. M., *The Englishman,* New York, Longmans, Green & Co., p. 41.
[5] Taine, H., *Notes on England,* New York, Henry Holt and Co., 1876.

of the national lack of disinterested curiosity in general, and in relation to foreign lands in particular. More traveled than their social equals on the Continent, Englishmen of education bring home not nearly as much of dependable first-hand information about foreign lands as might well be expected.

A far-reaching repercussion of the lack of curiosity responsible for their poor linguistic equipment as a nation is found in a rather costly error which the English, who are remarkable for their rapid and correct judgment of character, committed during the World War in overrating the worth of General Nivelle, the ephemeral successor of Marshal Joffre. This error of judgment was, it seems, very largely due to the fact that General Nivelle was one of the very few prominent French generals who could speak English well. The British Cabinet supported the young general's hazardous plan for an Anglo-French attack at the Rheims-Soissons section of the Western Front in April, 1917, against the opposition not only of the older and more distinguished French generals but also of the British General Headquarters. To borrow from Mr. Winston Churchill:

> "As the train bringing the Prime Minister home from Italy waited at the Gare du Nord, General Nivelle presented himself and unfolded his scheme in outline. The first impressions on both sides were favorable. Nivelle was invited to London and met the War Cabinet on January 15 (1917). His success was immediate. The British Ministers had never before met a French General whom they could understand. Nivelle not only spoke lucidly, but he spoke English. He had not only captured Fort Douaumont, but had an English mother. . . . Mr. Lloyd George's resistance to the new offensive plan had been

melting rapidly since the meeting at the Gare du Nord. It was soon to be transformed in ardent support." [1]

Because he confuses thinking, which is far from interfering with action because it decides action, and hesitation in thought, which does interfere with action, the Englishman has strong reluctance to mental experimentation as well as to crystallization of experience into theories. This tendency is, not unlike the other forms of English anti-intellectualism, sometimes exaggerated by critics. Hilaire Belloc exploits the typical British "complex" in question in the satirical anecdote about a witty Englishman who said that each time when he returned from a conference abroad he could read "written up in flaming letters upon the cliffs of Dover, for all returning men to read: 'Thou shalt not think. Thought is the foe of action. Therefore by thinking men and nations perish.'" [2]

H. G. Wells stigmatizes present-day English anti-intellectualism in no uncertain terms:

> "Most Englishmen, even those who belong to what we call the educated classes, still do not think systematically at all; you cannot understand England until you master that fact: their ideas are in slovenly detached little heaps, they think in ready-made phrases, they are honestly capable therefore of the most grotesque inconsistencies." [3]

The truth of the matter, however, is that in an emergency England has always found, and is likely to find in the future,

[1] Churchill, W., *The Aftermath,* New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931, p. 714.
Note: Mr. Lloyd George disclaims, not quite convincingly, all responsibility for the disastrous Nivelle offensive. See Lloyd George, D., *War Memoirs,* Boston, Little, Brown & Co., 1934, Vol. III, Ch. XIII.

[2] Belloc, H., *A Conversation with a Cat,* New York, Harper & Brothers, 1931, pp. 135, 139.

[3] *Joan and Peter,* New York, The Macmillan Company, 1918, p. 283.

powerful and enlightened men to lead her out of the wilderness of anti-intellectualism; but the price exacted by the anti-intellectual leadership responsible for the crisis may one day prove disastrously heavy. Mr. Winston Churchill, a well-qualified judge of intellectual powers, was justified in making his proud statement relative to the high degree of talent, strengthened by variety, which the British delegation to the Peace Conference of Paris exhibited.

On the other hand, it is true that inadequate preparation for war and the muddled conduct of operations, especially with regard to naval affairs, had created a world situation in which this capable delegation found itself seriously handicapped. Before the World War, England's anti-theoretical governing class had adhered, despite all the clear presages of an approaching conflict with Germany, to the policy of "wait and see." The governing group, disdaining the good advice of its brilliant, and hence mistrusted, members such as Mr. Winston Churchill, remained noncommittal to their suggestions regarding a thorough co-ordination of British measures of preparedness with those of France and Russia, England's potential allies. Because England had waited, she saw herself on the brink of an abyss more than once in the course of the World War. As a result of playing the obsolete game, "time gained, everything gained," the English found themselves unable to contribute to the Allied cause on land, and more particularly on sea, in a degree truly commensurate with the potential might of the Empire.

Many striking examples of that almost fatal muddling prior to and during the World War are to be found in documentary materials already available for students of history. Lack of space limits the brief review to the more surprising instances drawn from the records of naval affairs. On the east coast

of the British Isles, that is, on the North Sea side, where operations against the significantly increased German Navy would logically center, no harbor was prepared to receive the Grand Fleet. As a result, the fleet had to seek shelter in the roadstead of Scapa Flow, where the tide, changing in direction and strength four times during twenty-four hours, offered a measure of protection against German mines and submarines.

In the words of Mr. Winston Churchill:

"Everything depended upon the Fleet, and during these months of October and November [1914], the Fleet was disquieted about the very foundations of its being. . . . The Grand Fleet was uneasy. She could not find a resting place except at sea. Conceive it, the *ne plus ultra,* the one ultimate sanction of our existence, the supreme engine which no one had dared to brave, whose authority encircled the globe—no longer sure of itself. The idea has got round *'the German submarines were coming after them into the harbours.'* On the South Coast no one would have minded. You could go inside the Portland breakwater and literally shut the door. On the East Coast no such possibility existed. But Scapa was believed to be protected by its currents from submarine attack. . . . Now, all of a sudden, the Grand Fleet began to see submarines in Scapa Flow. Two or three times the alarm was raised. The climax came on October 17. Guns were fired, destroyers thrashed the waters, and the whole gigantic Armada put to sea in haste and dudgeon. . . . There was nothing to be done but to await the completion of the booms and obstructions, and meanwhile to keep the Fleet as far as possible out of harm's way. It really only felt safe when it was at sea. Then, steaming in the broad

waters, the Grand Fleet was herself again! but this involved a great strain on officers, men and machinery and a large consumption of fuel.

"On September 30 [1914], Sir John Jellicoe wrote to me on the general Fleet position. He pointed out that Germany had got a lead over us in oversea submarines. Another very serious warning reached me almost simultaneously from Sir David Beatty. 'The feeling,' he wrote, 'is gradually possessing the Fleet that all is not right somewhere. The menace of mines and submarines is proving larger every day, and adequate means to meet or combat them are not forthcoming, and we are gradually being pushed out of the North Sea, and off our own particular perch. How does this arise? By the very apparent fact that we have no Base where we can with any degree of safety lie for coaling, replenishing, and refitting and repairing, after two and a half months of war.'" [1]

To this may be added:

"Storage was not provided for a drop of oil for the Navy along the east coast from one end of Great Britain to another." [2]

The "pub" customers had merrily toasted their enemies on the eve of the World War as they had done many times before:

"They may build their ships
And think they know the game,
But they can't breed boys of the bulldog breed
That have made old England's name!"

[1] Churchill, Winston S., *The World Crisis,* New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932, pp. 217 ff.

[2] Bellairs, C., *The Battle of Jutland: the Sowing and the Reaping,* London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1919, p. 252.

The Germans had not only built some good ships but also bred excellent seamen, and, as a result, came to the battle of Jutland (Skagerrak)—the only great naval battle in the World War—inferior to the English numerically, to be sure, but not in the training and ability of the officers and men, and especially of the Commander-in-Chief himself. This German, Admiral Scheer, summarizing the results of the battle, said:

> "As is well known, the outcome of the battle was in our favor. We came to the battle with twenty-seven battleships, the English with forty-five. The English casualties were: 328 officers and 5769 men—dead; 25 officers and 485 men—wounded; 10 officers and 167 men—taken prisoners. Our casualties were: 160 officers and 2385 men—dead; 40 officers and 454 men—wounded; taken prisoners—none. The English losses in vessels were: 2 battleships put out of commission; 3 battle cruisers, 3 smaller cruisers, 8 destroyers sunk, the latter 14 vessels with their total crews. Our losses were: 1 old battleship sunk with the entire crew; 1 battle cruiser put out of commission and sunk by ourselves upon the removal of the crew to a torpedo-boat; 4 smaller cruisers, two with the entire crews, sunk; 4 torpedo-boats sunk with the total crews.
>
> "When the English losses became known, the English public was stunned by the defeat of the Navy."[1]

A British student of the battle of Jutland speaks of this failure by the Mistress of the Seas in much stronger terms:

> "Surely in an affair of such magnitude there ought to be an inquiry under oath. The public is being fooled with statements about hundreds of torpedoes being fired at the

[1] Admiral Scheer, von, *Vom Segelschiff zum U-Boot,* Leipzig, Quelle & Meyer, 1925, S. 300 f.

Grand Fleet by the destroyer attack which made Lord Jellicoe twice turn his fleet four to eight points from the enemy, and so go out of the fight. Actually it is known that only eleven torpedo tracks were seen on the first occasion and about two on the second. . . . The attempt to find a make-weight in the torpedo armaments is simply countered by the fact that there were 151 ships in the Grand Fleet to 115 under von Scheer, and each of these ships can be regarded as a torpedo platform. We had 78 destroyers better armed than the 77 destroyers under von Scheer, and 36 cruisers to his 11, which were decidedly inferior in armament. With the exception of the protective armour in his battle-cruisers, no admiral ever had less cause to complain of the force at his disposal, and it was these same battle-cruisers, together with the night work of the destroyers, which will enable the future historian to say that, had the battleships and cruisers been used with as great enterprise, Jutland might indeed have been the most decisive naval battle in history. Otherwise the record would stand like this: 'Jutland was a battle which did not resemble former victories, for at St. Vincent we pitted 15 battleships against 27 of the enemy, and at Trafalgar 27 against 37 battleships. At Jutland when 27 Dreadnoughts stood in line against 16, in spite of a preponderance in cruisers and destroyers, they allowed 11 destroyers to drive away the whole 27 Dreadnoughts out of action so that they never fought again.' The future historian will examine this extraordinary occurrence from the German point of view in the light of utterances such as that of the gunnery lieutenant of the *Deutschland* that 'torpedo attack in the daytime was almost hopeless, because the English de-

stroyers averaged faster than ours, and I do not need to tell you that their guns were much heavier.' "[1]

Now, what was the primary cause of this singular failure of the British Navy in the battle of Jutland? The competence and bravery of the officers and men are not to be doubted; yet victory was not brought to old England by her naval forces, so clearly superior numerically and also technically to the German force. The basic disadvantage of the English, which put to naught their material superiority, consisted in the fact that the Commander-in-Chief and his staff lacked proper training in the theory of naval warfare. Skepticism of theory and a confused concept of the very term *theory,* which are so characteristic of the English, cost the nation much of its international prestige and cost the world the protracted slaughter of the War and the barely less horrible misery of a delayed recovery.

A modern naval battle is a more complex affair than St. Vincent and Trafalgar were. Unless a nation has at its service a sufficient number of staff officers trained for conducting naval battles through mental experimentation and co-ordinated maneuvers, it will go hard with that nation when pitted against an enemy effectively schooled for the complexities of modern warfare. In a modern naval battle orders must be given by the Commander-in-Chief too rapidly to be fully formulated and explained by coded radio messages to the commanders of various units; often they cannot be given—or received—at all. Unless there is a "doctrine," a theory which permeates the minds of the commanders of the squadrons and individual vessels, and enables these officers to anticipate correctly the

[1] Bellairs, C., *The Battle of Jutland,* London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1919, pp. 266 f.

intentions and dispositions of the Commander-in-Chief, many costly blunders may be expected in the confusion which inevitably characterizes a modern naval encounter.) Commander Bellairs wrote on the conduct of the battle of Jutland:

"Lord Jellicoe's mental outlook was opposed to the staff idea with its consequent organization and decentralization of work. He did nothing to encourage its development before the War. During his command of the Grand Fleet he made no serious attempt to separate operations from administration. His own time was largely devoted to all kinds of minor administrative matters to the corresponding neglect of large questions of policy and tactics. . . . When ships like the *Queen Elizabeth* were building, the necessity for War Staffs was not foreseen by the material school. So just as we found that our ships were designed not wholly to suit fighting requirements but to fit existing docks, so now we have to relate that this brain of the fleet had to be composed as best we could to fit into ships which were not designed to carry a War Staff!

". . . Until a real War Staff has been at work for some time, and a mass of officers passed through it and into the various fleets, the importance of decentralization in command will not be generally recognized; for then and then only, will the personnel of the Navy be possessed of a common doctrine of war which enables the subordinate to anticipate the wishes of his chief. Failing that, all look to the flagship. The spirit is to conform in all to the movements of the Commander-in-Chief, and to await his orders. Such a system is impossible in a battle area which spreads itself over several hundred square miles, and where movements are at a speed of from 20 knots upwards on

the sea, and from 100 knots upwards in the air, and where, in a sea so misty as the North Sea, the larger portion of his own fleet, as well as the enemy, may be out of sight of the flagship. The truth is that the Navy has always been in constant danger of mistaking mere seamanship and technical knowledge as complete equipment for war. . . . Had the clever young gunnery officer, Lieutenant Jellicoe, escaped that system, and had his mind been wisely directed to the study of how to wage war, then with mind broadened, with heart enthused, and steeped in the will to conquer, he, too, when the day of trial came might have won a victory which would have profoundly modified the history of the world."[1]

It was not that the British governing group did not possess in its midst individuals who were conscious of the importance of sound theoretical training for superior naval officers. Mr. Winston Churchill, perhaps the most capable statesman of the period, insisted in 1912 that a Naval War Staff be formed:

"It is known that when Mr. Churchill proposed the foundation of a Naval War Staff in 1912 and the special training of officers to fit them to command in war, Lord Jellicoe had no sympathy with the idea, and when he went to the Admiralty as Second Sea Lord he did much to kill the possibility of such a War Staff ever being a reality. He could not conceive that training for war, based on history, was required. In his opinion, the men to command were those who had received their entire training in the specialist schools (such as gunnery, torpedoes, mine laying, etc.); and had spent their time at sea on specialist

[1] Bellairs, C., *The Battle of Jutland,* London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1919, pp. 249 f., 253 ff.

problems. His own ideas of a staff were bounded entirely by material considerations; and on his staff in the *Iron Duke* predominance was given to material."[1]

Mr. Churchill was not listened to; he must have been too brilliant for his professionally muddling colleagues, as he was suspended at a time when his activity and his personality were energizing the navy and giving vitality and efficiency to the work of the Admiralty. His administration of the Admiralty in the initial period of the World War, and his strategic counsels in general, imprudently or willfully neglected by the Government, are a bright page in the dark picture of the inept conduct of the war by the British in particular. His removal in May, 1915, from the post of the First Lord of the Admiralty was one of the greatest defeats that the Allies suffered in the World War, a defeat not a little responsible for the prolongation of the war and for its dubious outcome.

Again it may be noted that, during the Italo-Ethiopian war, which was at bottom an Anglo-Italian conflict, though bloodless on the English side, Mr. Churchill was pointedly overlooked—in England at any rate; he was not included in the Baldwin Cabinet of November, 1935. Brilliant and far-sighted to the degree of making his anti-intellectual colleagues uncomfortable, he was left out, for the second time, at a moment when he might have proved most useful to his country. This was a victory not only for the Italians, but also for the Germans. The New York *Times* correspondent from Berlin correctly appraised the situation when he cabled on November 16, 1935, as follows:

"The Conservative victory in the British election was interpreted in German political quarters and the press as a

[1] Bellairs, C., *The Battle of Jutland,* London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1919, pp. 274 f.

personal triumph for Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin and approval by the British people of a strong foreign policy in keeping with the importance of the British Empire. As such, the victory is greeted in Germany with respectful admiration mixed with only one anxiety, the name of which is Winston Churchill. . . .

". . . Mr. Churchill's role in 1914 as the First Lord of the Admiralty is not forgotten in Germany and his renewed presence in the British Government at a time when events in Europe demand new decisions would not contribute to the German peace of mind."

Throughout the course of the World War anti-intellectualism dictated Admiralty policies; and the sovereign opportunity lost at Jutland was never to be recovered:

"The High Seas Fleet [the German *Hochseeflotte*] remained the great controlling factor behind a two years' submarine campaign which nearly lost to us the war. Its existence completely deterred us from action in the Baltic, and was therefore a great factor in the downfall of Russia. For two and a half years after Jutland it forced us to maintain the Grand Fleet under continuous steam with all the immense diversion of personnel and material urgently needed for anti-submarine campaign. It kept up the menace of a German invasion, which, rightly or wrongly, so impressed our Government that a great Army was maintained in this country until Gough's army was defeated through the lack of these men, who were then sent." [1]

[1] Bellairs, C., *The Battle of Jutland,* London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1919, pp. 255 f.

The most striking manifestation of the "impious skepticism of theory" shown by the High Command of the British Navy in connection with the battle of Jutland was perhaps the one related by the Russian Naval Attaché to the Grand Fleet, who witnessed the battle from the *Hercules:*

> "On the 3rd June I talked with some of the officers of our own, and other ships, about the battle. Their views about the battle itself and its various stages differed strikingly; not only in details, but even as to the general course of the action and its geographical position. All, however, were clearly convinced that it could not be regarded as a victory for us. The Commanding officers were not even called together for a close discussion. Such an exchange of observations and experiences would surely have been of great value, especially with respect to the lessons the battle had taught. It was, indeed, possible that circumstances would force us to put to sea again a few days later, in which case the same mistakes might be repeated and cause fresh losses." [1]

Another important study, recently published, of British naval operations 1914-1918, *Scapa Flow to the Dover Straits,* by an Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Roger Keyes, corroborates the analysis of the situation made by the writers quoted above. With relation to the battle of Jutland in particular Admiral Keyes relates, "how miserably unhappy and disgusted" the participants in the battle of Jutland were on the morning after the fight. He ruefully reflects on the various opportunities lost by the British Naval Command after the departure of Winston Churchill in May, 1915. The three principal op-

[1] Schoultz, G., *With the British Battle Fleet: War Recollections of a Russian Naval Officer,* London, Hutchinson and Co., 1926, p. 154.

portunities were: forcing the Dardanelles in order to open the route for supplying the Russians with war materials, the battle of Jutland where the German High Seas Fleet could have been destroyed, and the similar chance offered by the excursion of the German Navy on August 19, 1917. The Admiral makes a strong indictment of the anti-intellectualists, the "material school," as he writes, "whose outlook could be summed up in the phrase I heard when I joined the Grand Fleet: 'If we never leave the Flow, we win the war.'" The author throws additional light upon the blind tenacity of this "material school," who opposed any imaginative plan for the conduct of naval operations against Germany, and upon the untold waste, material and moral, which resulted from such an impious skepticism of theory.

The slowness and bungling in meeting the German submarine danger is another impressive monument to English anti-intellectualism. One can readily understand Mr. Walter Page's desire to write two books about the English, one praising them and another cursing them,[1] when one reads the account given by Admiral Sims, U. S. Navy, of his interview with Admiral Lord Jellicoe, then the First Sea Lord, in the spring of 1917:

> "After the usual greetings, Admiral Jellicoe took a paper out of his drawer and handed it to me. It was a record of tonnage losses for the last few months. This showed that the total sinkings, British and neutral, had reached 536,000 tons in February and 603,000 in March; it further disclosed that sinkings were taking place in April which indicated the destruction of nearly 900,000 tons. These figures indicated that the losses were three and four times

[1] Hendrick, B. J., *The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page,* New York, Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1925, Vol. III, Part II, p. 296.

as large as those which were then being published in the press. It is expressing it mildly to say that I was surprised by this disclosure. I was fairly astonished; for I had never imagined anything so terrible. I expressed my consternation to Admiral Jellicoe.

"'Yes,' he said, as quietly as though he were discussing the weather and not the future of the British Empire. 'It is impossible for us to go on with the war if losses like this continue.' 'What are you doing about it?' I asked. 'Everything that we can. We are increasing our anti-submarine forces in every possible way. We are using every possible craft we can find with which to fight submarines. We are rebuilding destroyers, trawlers, and like craft as fast as we can. But the situation is very serious and we shall need all of the assistance we can get.' 'It looks as though the Germans were winning the war,' I remarked. 'They will win, unless we can stop these losses—and stop them soon,' the Admiral replied."[1]

In his *War Memoirs,* Mr. Lloyd George relates some impressive facts illustrating the false anti-intellectualism that pervaded the Admiralty and interfered with the work of combating the submarine danger, even after this danger had taken on the proportions of a calamity, thanks to the unpreparedness prior to the World War and the unimaginative handling of the naval situation during the first two years and a half of the war:

". . . of all their delusions the most astounding was that which concerned the number of British vessels sailing the high seas and needing escort. This was not some obscure

[1] From *The Victory at Sea,* by Admiral W. S. Sims, pp. 8 f., copyright 1920 by Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., New York.

and disputable issue that could be determined only by risky experiment. It was merely a matter of available statistics accurately added up. The blunder on which their policy was based was an arithmetical mix-up which would not have been perpetrated by an ordinary clerk in a shipping office. It nevertheless bewildered the Sea Lords and drove them out of their course for months. Common sense or reference to Lloyd's register and a sum in simple addition would have given them the facts. Up to the middle of 1917 there was no one on the Board of Admiralty who possessed this triple qualification. Here is the fateful error in accountantship which nearly lost us the War, and might have done so, had no one pointed it out in time to the Sea Lords.

"For some time past the Admiralty had by order of the Government been in the habit of publishing week by week the number of vessels lost by submarine attacks. And in order to make this dismal news sound as hopeful as possible, they had issued with it a return supplied by the Customs Authorities of the number of vessels that had entered and left British ports during the week. To swell this number, every entry and exit was counted, including the numerous goings and comings of coastwise small craft of the smallest dimensions, passing from harbour to harbour on the coast, so that it reached a figure of about twenty-five hundred weekly entrances and as many clearances. Probably these figures did not deceive the German High Command, though they doubtless served to encourage Neutrals and depress the enemy populations. Unhappily, they also deceived our own Admirals!" [1]

[1] Lloyd George, D., *War Memoirs,* Vol. III, p. 93. Reprinted by permission of Little, Brown and Company.

The English pride themselves, and are justified in so doing, upon their resourcefulness in practical affairs. Robinson Crusoe is extolled as the type that best represents the national character. When cast upon the island, "instead of shrieking or writing poetry, he calmly sets about building a house, and making pottery and laying out a farm."[1] This Crusonian self-reliance is, no doubt, characteristic of the English. On the other hand, their lack of practice or ability in co-ordinating national measures and policies through mental experimentation has frequently brought them to a painful *impasse*. The conduct of the World War, with all its diplomatic, commercial, and moral, as well as purely technical or military problems, furnished abundant and unforgettable illustrations of very imperfect co-ordination and theoretical unpreparedness on the part of England's public men, taken as a group. Lord Riddell in his diary tells about a meeting with the Australian Prime Minister, Mr. Hughes, for breakfast at the home of Lloyd George at 10 Downing Street. Quite naturally the conversation concerned the conduct of the war. When Mr. Hughes was asked his opinion about the manner in which the war was being carried on he said that England seemed to have a number of able men but each was acting on his own initiative and it was obvious that there was no definite plan. He thought that with the vast resources of the British Empire properly co-ordinated any reasonable strategic plan could be successful. Using Australia as an example, the Australian Prime Minister asserted that Australia if asked to supply men could have furnished rapidly and with very little assistance from London three hundred thousand men, armed and ready

[1] Leslie Stephen's words quoted in Dixon, W. M., *op. cit.*, p. 33.

to fight. No such call was made, however. He concluded by saying again, "You have no definite plan." [1]

The British Navy, to be sure, rendered inestimable services to the Allied cause, but it failed to achieve a decisive and timely victory. It seems justifiable to attribute the poor showing made by the British Empire in the World War primarily to the failure of the British Navy to live up to its material possibilities. It seems equally justifiable to attribute this failure to the anti-intellectualistic skepticism of theory, which pervaded the governing circles in general, and the Admiralty Board in particular. As a result, England came out of the trial of the World War with a diminished prestige, despite her territorial gains. The German Navy was defeated on land, so to speak; not only in the eyes of former enemies and friends, but also in the judgment of her more far-sighted imaginative sons, England had suffered great loss of prestige.

Admiral Wemyss wrote with relation to the armistice negotiations:

> "Sunday, November 10 [1918] . . . When it came to discussing the Naval terms, Vanselow, a member of the German delegation, showed a captiousness which was tiresome and quite unavailing. He made the remark, was it admissible that their fleet should be interned at Scapa Flow, until the disposal of it by the Peace Conference, seeing that they had not been beaten?—the reply to this was obvious and it gave me a certain amount of pleasure to observe that they had only to come out!" [2]

[1] Riddell, G. A. R., *War Diary 1914-1918,* London, Nicholson and Watson, 1933, pp. 161 f.

[2] Wemyss, Lady W., *The Life and Letters of Lord Webster Wemyss, Admiral of the Fleet,* London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1935, pp. 393 f.

What the Admiral really felt while he was treating with the Germans, already defeated on land and suing for an armistice, is summarized by his biographer as follows:

"What disturbed him far more at the time was the dissatisfaction which he knew was being felt by the Grand Fleet, and more especially Admiral Beatty, for he well entered into their feelings. The Grand Fleet had been the idol, the pride of the nation. To belong to it was the ambition of every naval officer, not to do so almost a slur. True to Nelsonian traditions it seemed to them a sheer impossibility that the war should be brought to a successful conclusion without that great and glorious victory for which they had, amid the gales and fogs of the North Sea, been awaiting over four years, only to realize that the war had been fought and won." [1]

The former Commander-in-Chief of the German Navy made upon the termination of the World War the following prediction of decline of the naval prestige of England:

"Even though the Briton thinks fit to look down upon us in contempt and derision, this superiority cannot be free from a sediment. He cannot help remembering that he did not defeat us in battle and that the methods of procedure which he used against us will be avenged.

"Other powers will step forth on the world stage, and the sea domination will fall to the one which, as in Nelson's time, will have succeeded in establishing its sway in open fight." [2]

[1] Wemyss, Lady W., *The Life and Letters of Lord Webster Wemyss, Admiral of the Fleet,* London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1935, p. 397.

[2] Admiral Scheer, von, *Deutschlands Hochseeflotte im Weltkrieg: Persönliche Erinnerungen,* Berlin, August Scherl, 1921, SS. 506-507.

Of these predictions, the one concerning the demand of other powers for a place in the naval sun has already more than once proved correct. Great Britain had to abandon her traditional claim to the right to possess a navy as powerful as the two strongest foreign navies put together—"the two-power" standard. She had first to admit the claim to equality on the part of the United States in 1922; and next, acquiesce in the Japanese claim to equality, in 1936. In the Italo-Ethiopian conflict, English sea power was, for all practical intents and purposes, challenged by Mussolini, and the English did not pick up the gauntlet. Evidently, the men responsible for the destinies of England did not feel that either materially or morally the English naval and air forces could chastise the young Italian sea and air power without serious risk. Sir Samuel Hoare declared, unequivocally, in the House of Commons on December 19, 1935, that his plan for effecting peace between Italy and Ethiopia, at the expense of the latter—consequently for placing a premium on the unprovoked aggression committed by Italy against a fellow-member of the League of Nations—had been prompted by his fear of "a European conflagration" and also by the apprehension of "an isolated war between Britain and Italy." Remembering Bismarck's witty remark with regard to the employment of the term *Europe* as a diplomatic smoke screen, it is the latter part of the former British Foreign Secretary's statement that is of moment. A member of His Majesty's Opposition asked Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin in the House of Commons on December 17, "whether it was the Government's policy to use the fleet if necessary or run away." No reply was given to this question.

This reluctance to "use the fleet" and the consequent diplomatic defeat of England in the Italo-Ethiopian conflict must be attributed to causes other than the idealism of the "new

diplomacy" or the material weakness of England as compared with Italy. Perhaps this was again a case of poor organization and unimaginative "wait and see" policy—fresh manifestations of the false anti-intellectualism, which had interfered with the organization and application of the British Empire's potential naval strength at the time of the World War.

The history of the World War, in particular of the naval operations, fails to bear out the burden of Mr. Galsworthy's claim that the Englishman makes constant small blunders, but few, almost no, great mistakes; that he is a slow starter, but there is no stronger finisher. As to the outcome of the Anglo-Italian conflict of 1935-1936, in which Mussolini triumphed, perhaps beyond his own expectations, the following appraisal made by an American observer, Mr. H. R. Knickerbocker of the International News Service, in his London dispatch of May 6, 1936, may be quoted:

> "For the first time in more than a century the British fleet in the Mediterranean faces the necessity of turning tail and steaming home with an untouched enemy jeering the ignominious withdrawal. . . .
>
> "For seven months, two-thirds of the fighting strength of the British Navy, more than 150 war vesels, more than 700,000 tons of battleships, cruisers, destroyers, and aircraft carriers, have waited at the mouth of the Suez Canal, for word from London to act to stop the war in Abyssinia. For seven months Italian ships laden with guns and bombs and men to kill Abyssinians have sailed serenely past and laughed at the British officers standing tight-lipped on their gun-decks, binoculars trained on the grinning enemy.
>
> "Not in modern times has British patience been tried so

hard. Not since the Napoleonic wars has British pride been so hard hit. They say the British lose every battle except the last. But this is the first time they have threatened a fight and quit." [1]

The handling by Great Britain of the international diplomatic and naval skirmish—called "controversy"—in connection with the Spanish Civil War showed only a slight, if any, improvement upon her management of the situation which preceded, accompanied, and followed the conquest of Ethiopia by Italy. "Advance warnings" sent by the Chamberlain Government to Il Duce, which were unheeded by him, were at par, it may be added, with the British protests, practically ignored by the Japanese, during the "unofficial" Sino-Japanese War.

In closing, we will mention just one more illustration of the English reluctance to experiment in imagination and to work with ideas and theories. In strange contradiction to his eminent appreciation of the economy of force, the Englishman, who was the originator of the modern industrial system, has fallen away from the systematic rationalization of industries. As a result, he is seriously hampered in world markets by competition, not only on the part of the United States and several European countries, but also on the part of Japan, the latest to arrive in world markets. In fact, the Japanese seem to

[1] Associated Press, London, June 15, 1936.
The criticisms passed on the conduct of British Policy in what Mr. Eden euphemistically called "the Italo-Abyssinian dispute" were epitomized by Mr. Arthur Greenwood, M.P., in the following much-quoted statement: "The Prime Minister and his colleagues are in the words of Shelley:

'Rulers who neither see, nor feel, nor know
But leech-like to their fainting country cling.'"

Carnegie Foundation for International Peace, *British Foreign Policy,* September, 1936, No. 322, p. 345. *See* also "The Greatest British Defeat Within Living Memory," in Hutton, G., *Is It Peace?,* New York, The Macmillan Company, 1937; Slocombe, G., *The Dangerous Sea: The Mediterranean and Its Future,* New York, The Macmillan Company, 1937.

be pushing the Englishman from his particular perch—preponderance in the textile industries, if not yet from his position on the high seas. Impressed with the danger of his fellow-countrymen's "not being a match in the long run even for retarded Asiatics, who today still are buying either goods or machinery from England," Mr. Douglas Woodruff, in his *Plato's Britannia,* thinking perhaps about Princess Elizabeth's chances of becoming Queen of England, muses:

> " 'They have grown rich and comatose,' said Agathon, 'and do not think as clearly as they did when they had a woman to rule them; for nothing makes men more wide awake than being ruled by women and not knowing what is coming next or how to give satisfaction, as you, Socrates, know better than any of us.' . . .
>
> " 'It is a striking coincidence,' I said, 'that the English have twice been ruled for a long period by a woman, and that each time, under an outward appearance of good government, far-reaching changes have taken place in the nature of the policy. For I do not think anyone will accuse us of sacrificing truth for the sake of smartness, if we say that under the first of these two Queens a monarchy became an oligarchy, while under the second an aristocracy became a democracy.' "[1]

Or will it be a reform in an education toward leadership which will remedy the serious drawbacks of England's anti-intellectualism and bring new assurance of a continuance of the Empire? Will the English, skillful in comprehending and handling men, develop also the art of handling ideas?[2]

[1] New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1931, pp. 8, 59.

[2] Cf. "Some Reflections on the Functions of Governments and Soldiers, Respectively, in a War" and "Lord Haig's Diaries and After," in Lloyd George, D., *op. cit.,* Vol. VI, pp. 330-347, 248-359.

BOOK TWO

THE FRENCH MIND

Chapter IV

FRENCH RATIONALISM AND ITS INSTRUMENTS

THE TRUE NATURE OF FRENCH RATIONALISM

THE chronicles of the World War offer curious illustrations of the racial admixtures from which the modern European nations have issued. For instance, a Captain Muller served as aide-de-camp to General Joffre and a Lieutenant-Colonel Zopff, as chief of the Intelligence Bureau of the Great General Headquarters (*Grand Quartier Général*); while on the German side a commanding officer who played an important part in the battle of Tannenberg was General François. Such anomalies warn the student of comparative national psychology to center his effort upon seizing the mental traits that distinguish a French Muller or Zopff from a German François; for who can hope to fathom the biological mysteries of the West? Is not Clemenceau described as a man with a "large square head, deeply furrowed face, prominent cheek bones, yellow complexion, a Kalmuck whose white thick drooping moustache was, however, that of a Gaul"? [1]

Believing in the wisdom of this course, we shall not fall into the temptation to draw a racial pedigree of the French people. It is not our purpose to trace the obscure blood strains of this cosmopolite of nations; but to discover the national indi-

[1] Bugnet, C., "Foch et Clemenceau," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15 décembre 1936, p. 856.

viduality beneath the personal variations which still bespeak the blood of Celt, Roman, and Frank, of Goth, Hun, Norman, and Saracen. We seek to read the French mind beneath the biological puzzle of bloods; we shall try to seize the true face of France—as an ethnic-psychological group—her distinctive system of tastes, inclinations, memories, loyalties, aspirations, and beliefs. The French fondness for self-analysis, as individuals and as a nation, is of inestimable assistance in such a search.

Representative French students agree in recognizing rationalism as the key characteristic of their national psychology. In the philosophical vocabulary, rationalism is a word of more than one meaning. In this discussion the term is to be taken in its everyday sense—rationalism as the belief in the supremacy of reason over the rest of the human faculties. The difference between the rationalism of the French and that of other nations is primarily one of degree. The French are inclined to believe that reason is the only dependable regulator of life. The typical Frenchman, it is fittingly said, believes that people can be swung on an idea as on a cord. The truth to him is something to be seen with the light of one's reasoning power, and not felt, more or less vaguely, in the heart. It may be of interest to recall some representative professions of faith in the supreme power of reason.

Descartes taught that the foremost capacity of man is that of correct judgment and of distinguishing the true from the false. In the *Second Meditation* he defines man as the thinking animal: "Strictly speaking, I am nothing but something that thinks, i.e., a mind, an instrument of understanding." According to Descartes, through whom speaks the popular wisdom of France, the way to truth is not that of intuitive prophetic vision but of an orderly, methodical search—a clear,

logical-mathematical reasoning; the undying example of the cogent power of reason is the Cartesian philosophical system itself.

The same faith finds concrete expression in the literature and history of France. Voltaire was convinced that the morality of a nation depended on the clarity of its thinking. And Beaumarchais, whose plays were an important factor in shaping the French Revolution, gives in the closing lines of the *Marriage of Figaro* this characteristic manifesto:

"One man is king; another, shepherd—
Just through the fate of birth.
Mere chance sets them so far apart;
Intelligence or worth
Of mind alone can change all that.
Death breaks the altar where
Our incense burned to twenty kings:
Immortal stands Voltaire!"[1]

This is a revolutionary counterpart of Richelieu's profession of faith in the power of reason, which he sets forth in his *Political Testament:* "Reason should be the regulator and the guiding principle in all things. One should act in all matters in accordance with the voice of reason, rather than of sentiment and emotion."

M. Gustave Lanson, the late director of the famous Ecole Normale Supérieure and one of the most distinguished and influential leaders of French education, analyzes the rationalism of the French ideal in the following terms:

"The Renaissance brought with it a deluge of cultural importations, chiefly Greek, Latin, Italian. But old France was by no means submerged in this deluge; she had her

[1] *Acte V, scène 19, septième couplet.*

voice in the choice and adaptation of all that was offered. She rejected or modified all that was incompatible with the national spirit, as molded by the four or five preceding centuries, or that was out of harmony with the conditions and customs of France.

"We have borrowed and absorbed from ancient civilization and from Italian civilization those elements best suited to enrich our national culture, which developed and fortified it while helping us to be the more ourselves.

"The sixteenth century had begun the sifting process which was terminated by the end of the eighteenth century; the seventeenth century had contributed an original reaction in the assimilation of the importations of the Renaissance. If we examine the wealth of our literature accumulated during these three classical centuries, how is the French ideal expressed in it?

"First, the French ideal manifests itself as faith in the power of intelligence, and in its instruments, knowledge and reasoning. It is characterized also by the will to regulate life and action by reason alone, as it is marked by the desire to understand and by diffidence toward things unintelligible.

"Hence arose the characteristically French effort to think well, in other words, the effort (a) to arrive at concepts which are true to reality, capable of demonstration, and, consequently, universally valid; (b) to think clearly, illuminating each step by analysis; (c) to think with order, that is to say, with due observance of logical relations between concepts as well as between premises and inferences; (d) to observe the sense of measure and harmony in the thinking process, in other words, to avoid sacrificing one verity to another. To sum up, the history

of literature of the three classical centuries reveals as the pre-eminent French ideal the pursuit of truth, clarity, logic, and a sense of proportion; which is completed by the hatred of falsity, hypocrisy, vagueness, confusion, exaggeration, and bluff.

"Second, this ideal of perfect intellectual form does not mean that the French are enslaved by form or that their ideal is entirely and exclusively intellectual. Reason does not rule out sentiment. It is an error to imagine that French literature is desiccated. Reason has its passions, above all the passion for verifying, rectifying, and implanting the practices of justice, humanity, and love. Impulses of sentimental and mystical nature when passed through the refinery of reason become moral truths, while moral evil becomes an intellectual absurdity, and the odious is strangled by intellectual ridicule. The French, then, accomplish through reason what others do through irrational moral sentiment and religious fervor. In the case of the French, sheer reason is capable of inspiring enthusiasm and of arousing the passion of pleasure.

"Finally, the French mind is revealed in the literary history of the three classical centuries as essentially and eminently practical. The French intellect is not satisfied with mere construction of ideas or mere play of sentiments. The old French common sense compels the intellect to apply itself to the handling of concrete problems of the world of realities. As a result, the French ideal is to think well in order to live well and to ameliorate life. Whoever is familiar with our literature, has doubtless perceived in it something else, something more potent than the mere product of precise intellectuals and estheticians. Our literature seeks to do more than merely train intellects and

to give esthetic pleasures. It seeks also to implant a practical ideal of good life.

"Our literature is not an image of a civilization; it is a civilization itself—to be more exact, a civilization in the making in which the ideal constantly strives to surpass reality. Even the ideal of the beautiful is transformed in it into the practical order of things, such as make life more agreeable through the invention of fashions in furniture, dress, and manners." [1]

When the extremists among the leaders of the French Revolution sought to do away with the traditional religion, they offered to the people as a substitute for the worship of Christ the cult of the goddess of reason. The conservative Alfred de Vigny defines God in *La Bouteille à la mer* as follows: "The true God, the Almighty God, is the God of ideas." Sully Prudhomme, the political philosopher, was convinced that while "one is happy only through the medium of feeling, no one can be great except through the power of thought." [2] Henri Poincaré, the celebrated mathematician and physicist, writes of the essential nature of man: "Man is but a tiny dot of light amidst the blind fury of the elements; the human mind is the dot of light that is proof against any tempest, and

[1] *L'Idéal français dans la littérature française de la Renaissance à la Révolution,* Bibliothèque de la civilisation française, Paris, 1927, pp. 11 ff. *See* also Feuillerat, A., *French Life and Ideal,* New York, Yale University Press, 1925; Fouillée, A., *Psychologie du peuple français,* Paris, Alcan, 1903; Hassell, A., *The French People,* New York, Appleton, 1901; Huddleston, S., *France and the French,* New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925; Lawton, F., *The Third French Republic,* London, Grant Richards, 1909; Lebon, A. and Pelet, P., *France as It Is,* London, Cassell & Company, 1888; Sarolea, Ch., *Le reveil de France,* London, Allen & Unwin, 1916.

[2] Académie française, *Recueil des discours de réception,* "Discours de M. Henri Poincaré du 28 janvier 1909 venant prendre séance à la place de M. Sully Prudhomme."

it is the only light we have."[1] This is but a restatement of an observation of Pascal's, made some two hundred years before in the *Pensées:* "All our worth consists in thinking well. It is in this realm that we should seek for greatness, and not in space or time, which we cannot fill anyhow. Let us then work at thinking well; such is the fundamental principle of morals." In the same vein M. André Gide declares:

> "Ideas, I must confess, interest me more than men—interest me more than anything. They live; they fight; they perish like men. Of course it may be said that our only knowledge of them is through men, just as our only knowledge of the wind is through the reeds that it bends; but all the same the wind is of more importance than the reeds."[2]

M. Edouard Herriot, a brilliant lecturer and essayist highly esteemed for his Cartesian qualities of lucidity and fine analysis, even by those who deplore his political activities as a leading member of the Radical Socialist Party, declares, to the applause of the French public:

> ". . . The source of life and the principal source of all harmony in life is in our mind. . . . Mind is the real origin of the just and the beautiful. Even animals and plants and inanimate bodies of nature are subject to the law of mathematics, that is to say, of reason. Nothing in nature is the result of chance. And in order to create beauty, it is necessary to imitate reason by accepting its laws of harmony. A beautiful piece of work is distin-

[1] *Ibid.*, "La réponse de M. Ernest Lavisse à M. Henri Poincaré."
[2] *The Counterfeiters,* Modern Library, 1931, p. 179.

guished by the proscription of all elements of chance. It is a work in which the defects due to the lack of precision of our senses are corrected by the counsel of the intellect. . . . My friends, be faithful to reason. . . . There is no real greatness except that which issues from reason. Light surpasses in beauty both form and color."[1]

On the whole the statesmen of France, her scholars, philosophers, and men of letters, whether conservative, liberal, or radical, are distinguished from their contemporaries in England and Germany by their faith in the power of reason as the supreme arbiter of life. Unfortunately, their worship at the altar of reason does not save the rationalists of France from dissensions, strife, and error, which would seem to cast some doubt upon the omnipotent validity of reason as the sole regulator of life. This discrepancy, however, though perceived by not a few Frenchmen, does not appear to have shaken the devotion of the French nation as a whole to the cult of reason.

In small things and great, rationalism manifests itself in the life of the French; it is a traditional attitude. In the *Chanson de Roland* the bard compares Roland, the valiant, with his friend Olivier, the prudent, not without a flick of reproach:

"Roland is brave, but Olivier is wise."[2]

Foch, the future marshal of France, voiced both the civil and military philosophy of his country in this characteristic advice to his students in the General Staff College: In order to be a military commander, one must be able to think under any circumstances, especially when the muscles give up and the nerves grate.[3]

[1] *Sous l'olivier,* Paris, Hachette, 1930, pp. 141, 145.

[2] See Petit de Julleville, L., *Histoire de la langue et de la littérature française dès origines à 1900,* Paris, Armand Colin, 1896-99, t. I, p. 68.

[3] Foch, F., *Principes de la guerre,* Paris, Berger-Levrault, 1917, pp. 17 ff.

The development of *bon sens,* that is the sense of proportion growing out of a clear perception of causes and effects and of the true meaning of things, is the supreme goal of French education. The admonition which the French child hears most frequently from his mother is, *"Sois sage, sois raisonnable."* So La Fontaine in his fable *The Shepherd Who Became a Minister of the State* says of the good fellow, who stepped so successfully from sheep-cote to court: "He had a lot of good sense and the rest took care of itself." Counsels of prudence and reason not infrequently occur in that charming book of adolescent mysticism and adventure, Alain-Fournier's *Le Grand Meaulnes,* which is a sort of French equivalent of *Huckleberry Finn.* The crowning compliment paid to Madame de Pompadour by Abbé Bernis celebrates the all-powerful marquise as "the most prudent of beauties." [1]

It is only logical that a rationalistic people should revere intellectual achievement. The popular masses, having despoiled and in large part wiped out the feudal nobility during the Reign of Terror, have since ignored the hereditary aristocracy. Only those who have distinguishd themselves as aristocrats of the mind enjoy popular respect. The average Parisian would not turn for a second look at a scion of the old nobility, but he is avid to see the distinguished man of letters, the scholar, the philosopher, of whom he has read in the daily papers so often. Edmond Rostand is true to French thought in the dialogue between father and son in the first act of *Cyrano de Bergerac:*

"THE YOUTH (*to his father*). The Academy is present?

"THE BURGHER. Yes . . . I perceive more than one

[1] Sainte-Beuve, C.-A., *Causeries du Lundi,* Paris, Garnier Frères, t. II, pp. 492-493.

member of it. Yonder are Boudu, Boissat and Cureau . . . Porcheres, Colomby, Bourzeys, Bourdon, Arbaut . . . All names not one of which will be forgotten. What a beautiful thought it is!"

In Paris such throngs of men and women are anxious to see a new member of the French Academy installed in his chair that it is necessary for the Prefect of Police to send a special squad of traffic policemen to handle admission to the Institute of France when the "Immortals" formally receive their new colleague. France is also unique in her custom of honoring her intellectual leaders in the naming of warships. The list of the active units of the French navy includes, for example, the battleships *Diderot, Voltaire, Condorcet,* and the cruiser, *Ernest Renan.* No unit in the British navy has ever been named for Shakespeare, Milton, Locke, or Berkeley; nor even has a German warship been christened, to our knowledge, Leibniz, Kant, Goethe, or Schiller.

The French value intellectual discipline as a great virtue. By intellectual discipline is meant the habit of orderly, clear, concentrated thinking; the habit of using one's thinking power as a kind of penetrating and tenacious beam of light to illuminate whatever object it is turned upon and not to leave that object before grasping its full meaning. The mind that is not deflected from its habit of ordered consideration and cogent analysis by untoward events or insidious designs is valued on par with, if not above, courage. Fostered by the school, the family, and other educational agencies, intellectual discipline is glorified in the national heroes of France; their glory is, of course, hallowed by the family, the school, and the arts, especially literature and the theater.

At the state banquet given by the French Government in

honor of Major Costes and Lieutenant Bellonte in October, 1930, after their return from the Paris-New York non-stop flight—the first in the history of aviation—the Prime Minister, M. André Tardieu, praised above all the preparation for the flight in which minutely elaborated co-operation between science and technique launched a great battle between the principle of method and the adventure of the unforeseeable.[1] The Editor of the *Revue des Deux Mondes,* M. René Doumic, writes of the event:

> "What seems to me of especial importance is the lesson to be drawn from the exploit of Costes and Bellonte. This lesson is now clear to everybody. It is the demonstration of the decisive role of a factor which is predominant in all scientific work, notably, method. . . . Everything pertinent to success had been studied, prepared, and arranged to the smallest detail: a special aircraft built for the purpose, the route scientifically chosen, the most favorable atmospheric conditions selected and seized. Reflection and pre-vision, together with *sang-froid,* have always been the surest guarantee of success, and today, amidst the complexities of modernity, this is more than ever true. After the achievements of Lindbergh, whose triumph also was due, in part at least, to minute preparation, Costes and Bellonte have now given us an excellent demonstration of the value of method." [2]

At the time of the death and funeral of Marshal Joffre the press and public speakers extolled "the Cartesian reason and method incarnated in Joffre" as the highest quality possessed by the departed general. It was stressed, in complete accord

[1] *Le Temps,* 31 octobre 1930.
[2] *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 15 septembre 1930, pp. 470 f.

with the historical truth recognized not only by French and Allied military historians but also by the Germans,[1] that Joffre's greatest achievement as the Commander-in-Chief of the French armies was the Battle of the Marne following the strategic retreat August 24-September 5, 1914. The impetuous German armies, pouring into France through Belgium, sought to encircle and to destroy the principal French forces. Joffre remained unperturbed in spite of the critical turn of events; he was unshaken in his adherence to the clear lesson of military history, which promised salvation to France on condition that the military and civil authorities keep their heads. This lesson, taught to Napoleon by Kutuzov in 1812, is to the effect that a country is not defeated as long as the bulk of its armed forces remains intact and under discipline. Besides, Joffre foresaw that the German invasion would sooner or later bulge forward into a crescent between the two great fortresses, Paris and Verdun, from which the French could attack the enemy on the flanks, and thus create a favorable situation for a general attack along the entire front.

Having clearly understood all this, Joffre did not permit anyone or anything to deflect him from the only logical plan of defense. He retreated in order to withdraw from the claws of the enemy, then irresistible, until they had been numbed by a prolonged exertion in the attempt to seize and destroy the evasive opponent and had generally been weakened to make it possible for Joffre to check if not break their momentum. When such time came, Joffre stopped his retreating armies and delivered the battle of the Marne.[2]

[1] See Kuhl, H. J., von, *Der Weltkrieg,* Berlin, Verlag Tradition, 1929, B. II, S. 77.

[2] *Note:* The military operation named by historians the battle of the Marne was, in reality, conducted along the entire front, the principal encounters taking place in the valleys of the Marne and the Ourcq. *See* Joffre, J.,

While we are on the subject of military history, the following testimony of a well-known English journalist may be cited:

> "No Englishman could have visited the French front during the war without being struck with the lucidity and skill with which anyone in command of anything, from the most illustrious general to the sergeant in the trench, could expound his job or enlarge on the strategical position to the stranger. Nowhere could one discover that inarticulate soldierly embarrassment which, to the English mind, is supposed to distinguish the man of action from the man of words, and to render the former incapable of coherent talk. In a country where children are educated to regard accomplished talk as a part of the equipment for life, audiences are not tolerant of the blundering and floundering which are regarded as menial in men of weight in this country." [1]

Military or civilian, no compliment is so highly praised by the Frenchman as that idiomatic, *bel esprit*—"fine, well-nourished, and graceful mind." In general, French flattery is of a nature distinctly intellectual. A good example is given by Dr. John Moore, a learned Scotsman, who studied medicine and surgery for two years in Paris (1749-1751) and traveled for five years on the Continent with the Duke of Hamilton (1772-1777). It will be appreciated by contemporary foreign visitors to France:

> "A stranger, quite new and unversed in their language, whose accent is uncouth and ridiculous in the ears of the

Mémoires, Paris, Plon, 1932, t. I, p. 364; Poincaré, R., *Au service de la France,* Paris, Plon, 1926-1933, t. V, p. 279.

[1] Spender, J. A., *The Public Life,* New York, Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1925, Vol. I, p. 320.

French, and who can scarcely open his mouth without making a blunder in grammar or idiom, is heard with the most serious attention and never laughed at, even when he utters the oddest solecism or equivocal expression.

"'I am afraid,' said I yesterday to a French gentleman, 'the phrase which I used just now is not French.' 'Monsieur,' replied he, 'this expression, it is true, is not idiomatic, but it deserves to be.'"[1]

The politician, "working up" his constituency, addresses its members, severally and collectively: "You who grasp things so well, who have an open mind and see farther than others . . ."

THE INSTRUMENTS OF RATIONALISM: INTELLECTUAL DISCIPLINE AND THE POWER OF EXPRESSION

If the power of reason is the supreme regulator of life, then reason itself should be diligently cultivated to fulfill its vital task. How can reason be groomed to serve as the guide and mainstay in the life of the individual and the nation? This can be achieved, the French believe, by the combination of two methods: first, by training the school population for precise, clear, logical thinking; second, by exacting from the *élite,* the aspirants to leadership in all walks of life, a high degree of fertile thought, that is the thinking power from which no significant meanings of relevant data can escape; and the ability to crystallize thought in a lucid, comprehensive, yet concise statement.

How can these accomplishments be ascertained? An elabo-

[1] *A View of the Society and Manners in France, Switzerland, and Germany,* printed at the Apollo Press, in Boston, for David West, 1792, p. 15.

rate system of examinations for admission, promotion, and graduation has been worked out, which functions throughout the educational system. Some jester has said that the entire French nation may be divided into two parts, those who take examinations and those who give them. The adults, who are already beyond the reach of boards of examiners which grant degrees and diplomas, are motivated to keep in mental trim by various examinations conditioning promotion in the civil and military service, and above all by the public expectation that one who aspires to a position of leadership in professional life or in national affairs possess and show intellectual distinction.

It is said that in France even a dinner party conversation can readily take on the significance of a competitive examination. The rationalist refuses to give support to the *mystique* of the great silent man, but judges as mediocre or inferior those who have nothing apt to say. In June, 1867, Emperor Alexander II of Russia and King William IV of Prussia visited Paris. M. Michel Chevalier, a senator and former professor at the *Collège de France,* notes in his diary with undisguised disapproval that the monarchs, neither of whom was a brilliant talker, "have had very little personal success. If it were not for the attempt on the life of the Czar, they would have been rapidly forgotten. They have not said one word worth remembering, and did not even have enough sense to have somebody coin one for them, as did the Count of Artois * in 1814." [1] Strict in judging the intellectual prowess of "front-page" foreigners, the French are still more implacable in judging their own countrymen who aspire to leadership. In accordance with this national tradition, examiners do not hesi-

* The count knew his Frenchmen!

[1] *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 1er novembre 1932, pp. 181 f.

tate to express to a candidate, in no uncertain terms, their disapproval of a poor composition or oral answer. Critics and book reviewers do the same thing for authors.

Voltaire once remarked that the French nation "is fond of all types of literatures, from mathematics to the epigram."[1] Indeed, whatever discussion is put before the public must possess the qualities of a literary composition. It must be an interesting exposition of facts and thoughts, clearly analyzed and expressed in well-chosen words, with all possible brevity and with pitiless elimination of the superfluous. A finished style is expected even from the scientist and the technician. To borrow from M. Henri Bergson:

> "There are two things that we value above everything else in French education, the qualities of clarity and composition which characterize the lectures of our master teachers and inspire their habit of constantly making appeal to creative thinking on the part of the pupil. These habits of clarity and composition stand, if for anything, for intellectual probity and the desire to make knowledge accessible to the greatest number of people.
>
> "With us, no scholar can boast that he has written books which no one save a dozen fellow-scholars can understand. We do not have a caste of the high priests of science. We believe that clarity is the mainstay of democracy. . . .
>
> "To mention philosophy, in particular, we do not like philosophical discussions bristling with technical, barbarous-sounding terms that erect a wall between philosophy and the general public. Our greatest thinkers, from Descartes on, have believed that there is no philosophical idea, how-

[1] "Conseil à un journaliste," 10 mai 1737.

ever profound and subtle, which could not be expressed in a language intelligible to everybody." [1]

While he adores clarity and is intolerant of obscurity and fumbling in speech or writing, the Frenchman dislikes the affected, trumpeting, and hammering sort of clarification of the points presented to him. Correct French is characterized by the clear articulation, by the delicate chiseling of every syllable, but it admits of very slight emphasis; the Frenchman resents emphatic intonation as a reflection on his intelligence. Charcot, the celebrated physician, while fully appreciating the genius of Beethoven, "detested Wagner, whom he considered . . . as being overemphatic and long-winded." [2] This is a characteristically French attitude, though perhaps not wholly justified in this case. The French mind is inimical to all obscurity, however ardent, and to all over-emphasis, however well-intentioned. Flights of poetic imagination and depth of mystic vision do not reconcile the Frenchman to a lack of strict unity and clarity in composition. More than one eminent French critic, Taine among the rest, failed to be charmed by *Faust,* because it "is not of one piece," but, like some Gothic cathedral built and rebuilt in the course of centuries, it lacks the balance and unity of a classic structure.[3]

[1] Quoted in Bouglé, C., and Gastinel, P., *Qu'est-ce que l'esprit français?* Paris, Librairie Marcel Rivière, 1930, pp. 100 f.

[2] Daudet, L., *Memoirs,* New York, Dial Press, 1925, p. 133.

[3] Cf. L. Daudet's appraisal of the works of Henrik Ibsen: "The works of the author of 'Peer Gynt' and 'The Master-Builder' are, one and all, obscure and confused. His imagination shows sometimes a lyric beauty; often it is original and always sympathetic; but it is enveloped in an atmosphere of mist. Ibsen's laughter is a grimace, his melancholy a prolonged stomach ache, his dialogue a series of mutual reproaches. Every one of his characters has suicidal tendencies. Their passions are haunted by their fears. They seem to live in cellars of bitterness, pessimism, and futile concupiscence. If that is what love is like in northern lands, then long live Romeo and Juliet, Don Quixote and Dulcinea." (*Memoirs, cit.,* p. 218.)

Goethe, on the other hand, expressed in the *Conversations with Eckermann* his admiration for French literary art:

"Often, my own productions seem wholly strange to me. To-day, I read a passage in French, and thought as I read: 'This man speaks cleverly enough—you would not have said it otherwise.' When I looked at it closely, I found it is a passage translated from my own writings! . . ." [1]

"I have known and loved Molière from my youth, and have learned from him during my whole life. I never fail to read some of his plays every year, that I may keep up a constant intercourse with what is excellent. It is not merely the perfectly artistic treatment that delights me; it is the amiable nature, the highly-formed mind, of the poet. There is in him a grace and a feeling for the decorous, and a tone of good society, which his innate beautiful nature could only attain by daily intercourse with the most eminent men of his age. Of Menander, I only know a few fragments; but these give me so high an idea of him, that I look upon this great Greek as the only man who could be compared to Molière." [2]

The genius of Voltaire delighted Goethe:

"Indeed, all is good that is written by so great a genius as Voltaire, though I cannot excuse all his profanity. But you are right to give time to those little poems addressed to persons; they are among the most charming of his works. Not a line but is full of thought: clear, bright, and graceful." [3]

[1] New York, E. P. Dutton & Co., Everyman's Library, 1930, p. 146.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 180. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 285.

Goethe praised Gerald's French translation of his masterpiece in the following terms:

> "I do not like to read my *Faust* any more in German; but in this French translation all seems again fresh, new, and spirited. *Faust* is, however, quite incommensurable, and all attempts to bring it nearer to the understanding are vain. Also, the first part is the product of a rather dark state in the individual. However, this very darkness has a charm for men's minds; and they work upon it till they are tired, as upon all insoluble problems. . . ." [1]

The rationalistic tradition of intellectual discipline, of artful and artistic employment of the power of speech, is of long standing.

The French national epics intrigue us by their unity of design, their rapid and logical movement, and by the absence of sentimental details and mystic obscurities. In the just words of M. Gaston Paris, "Movement in the *Chanson de Roland* is simple and logical from the beginning to the end . . . the narrative, if it errs at all against good style, does so through an excess of symmetry rather than through lack of unity." [2]

The art of the bards who composed the *Chansons de Geste* consists primarily in the careful observance of the natural sequence of the events they relate and in the avoidance of the superfluous: *Rien de trop!* The bard went straight to the point and presented his story swiftly and clearly, with the strictest economy of words. Pastoral details and emotional outbursts were foreign to his art. The national taste prescribed for him a sober and strict sense of measure. A rationalistic interest in facts and ideas, as opposed to sentiment and the mysteries of

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 341.
[2] Petit de Julleville, L., *op. cit.*, t. I, "Introduction," page q.

the subconscious, mark French literature from the very beginning.[1]

The language destined to serve as the vehicle of such literary taste owes a great deal to the anonymous contributions of the gifted *causeurs* and *raconteurs* of all classes; yet the upper class deserves special mention in any consideration of the history of the French language, which, to borrow the picturesque words of M. Ferdinand Brunot, "out of the dialect spoken by the Roman legionary or colonist or slave has come the language spoken by the inhabitant of Paris and written by the academician."[2] While, in common with the feudal nobility of other lands, the French aristocracy was guilty of various excesses and abuses of power, it did apply itself wholeheartedly to the task of effecting phonetic harmony and clarification of the vernacular as soon as the new spirit had put an end to the medieval domination of Latin. When the middle class began to rise, as the pupil and the rival of the aristocracy, to its legitimate place in national life, it rapidly developed an ambitious and not unsuccessful determination to equal, and indeed surpass, the upper class in the elegancies of speech. As in the refinement of manners, the middle class passed through an inevitable phase of *préciosité*—finicalness, affectation, and exaggeration, immortalized by Molière in *Femmes savantes* and *Précieuses ridicules*. Because of false fear that ordinary words for ordinary things might sound vulgar, the exaggerated *préciosité* demanded the employment of the most extravagant periphrasis. Feet became "the dear sufferers" (*les chers souffrants*); hands, "the moving beautiful" (*les belles mouvantes*);

[1] Cf. Lanson, G., *Histoire de la littérature française,* Paris, Hachette, pp. 30 ff.

[2] Brunot, F., *Histoire de langue française dès origines à 1900,* Paris, Armand Colin, t. I, "Introduction," p. i.

teeth, "the furniture of the mouth" (*l'ameublement de la bouche*); wig, "the youth of aged persons" (*la jeunesse des vieillards*), and so on.

It was in 1635, while the ancient aristocracy still held sway, that Cardinal Richelieu established the French Academy. Its traditional ideals have been repeatedly described by the academicians in inaugural addresses. The following quotation is taken from the address made before the Academy by M. Vitet at the inauguration of M. l'Abbé Gratry:

"Whatever may be said about us as a body, we are thoroughly faithful to the traditions of our institution, and to speak well is our primary passion. When, therefore, we discover in the throng of men of letters a real writer, that is to say, one of those rare minds which respect a language less by obedience to its rules and usages learned in school than by the natural and subtle zeal of a devotee; one of those men who use words without enslaving themselves to them but tame words and make them serve the mind without, however, imposing on words any sort of phantastic or loud carriage; one of those who know how to find in the traditional forms of a language an accumulated force which, properly employed, is a sufficient means for expressing with powerful lucidity the most delicate movements of the soul and the thought—when good fortune brings such a writer into our field of vision, this is enough to charm us. When, being already attracted by the charm of the style, we, furthermore, discover under the pleasant form at one and the same time limpid and colorful, correct and yet original, also a noble heart and an intelligence of a high order, a sincerity naïve and enamoured of truth, you can judge for yourself how the attraction is increased.

In fact, the seduction becomes complete and irresistible. Such is the solution of your enigma—this is why you are here among us." [1]

The Academy has become in the course of time a kind of living Pantheon for at least some of the distinguished statesmen and soldiers of France. It has, however, never lost sight of its historic task as guardian of the language of the nation and the highest magistrate protecting the language from the infiltration of words and expressions which lack phonetic purity and logical clarity. In fulfillment of this task, the Academy issues a dictionary of the French words in good usage; the first edition of the dictionary was issued in 1694, which was followed by the editions of 1718, 1740, 1762, 1798, 1835, 1878, 1935. The *Times* aptly commented on the news of the completion of the latest edition:

"Five members of the Académie Française yesterday completed the work, begun 57 years ago, of preparing the eighth edition of its dictionary of the French language. . . . The unusual length of time which has been needed for the production of the latest edition is largely explained by the number of new words which have been brought into the language by science and sport, and by accelerated borrowing from other tongues.

"Imbued with a proper jealousy for the purity of their tongue, the Academicians have been faced with many difficult problems of recent years, especially in dealing with the numerous words which stand astride the border line dividing freshly imported or newly coined slang from the ripened products of long usage. Thus, after much solemn

[1] Académie Française, *Recueil des discours,* Paris, Firmin Didot Frères, 1872, p. 178.

discussion, they reluctantly gave technical if not moral approval to the word *'tord-boyaux'* (twist-guts), as a general term to describe the fiercer alcoholic liquors, but in a recent session utterly refused to admit the word 'Yankee' into the sacred columns." [1]

While the middle class first imitated and then actually surpassed the upper class in intellectual matters in general and in linguistic interest in particular, the lower class has imitated the middle class. This imitation and emulation has produced some noteworthy peculiarities of French everyday life. Even the uneducated like "big" words; and municipalities employ in street signs such "big" expressions as *arrêt facultatif,* or "optional stop," for *arrêt sur signal,* "stop on signal." The French language has no idiomatic expression for the disparaging expression, "high brow," perhaps because every rationalistically minded person ardently desires to be one.

French newspapers, even small local ones, are characterized on the whole by a sober, correct, literary style as well as by the consideration given to literary subjects and to problems of language. The larger newspapers and many popular magazines carry special sections devoted to the questions raised by readers on linguistic problems, which are solved by literary experts. A public address is judged by the reading public of all ranks of society, not only with relation to content but also to form. In July, 1932, M. Edouard Herriot, then Prime Minister, gave in a public speech an account of recent negotiations at Geneva. Some newspapers in reporting the Prime Minister's statement of his determination to pursue the policies of peace attributed to him the words, *je ne faillirai pas,* while other newspapers printed, *je ne faiblirai pas.* An avalanche of

[1] The *Times* (London) *Educational Supplement,* September 14, 1935.

inquiries as to the exact expression used by M. Herriot broke out and the linguistic battle was on to determine which expression is the better usage.

So we find M. Doumer, President of the Republic, attracting wide attention by the construction used in referring to Paris as the city "whose very streets and squares have been bathed in heroism and liberty": *Paris . . . baigne ses rues et ses places de l'héroïsme et de liberté.* The question of the day at once became whether *baigne dans* is not to be preferred to *baigne de.* Again urgent inquiries went into the newspapers and the purists sat in judgment. A verdict was rendered upholding the President, upon the precedent established by Lesconte de Lisle who, in *Le Sommeil du Condor* wrote: *Baigné d'une lueur qui saigne sur la neige.*[1] It is no wonder that when the grammar recently issued by the French Academy was subjected to criticism by M. Ferdinand Brunot, the celebrated historian of the French language, the controversy at once became a matter of intense national interest; savant and taxi driver alike were profoundly drawn into the controversy.

The prominence of literary problems in French daily press and periodicals and the strictly sober literary style of French journalism sometimes surprise foreign journalists. News that might elsewhere be blazoned in the largest type on the front page often has to be found, if at all, in a leading French newspaper such as *Le Temps, Le Figaro,* and the like, among the "miscellaneous items" printed in small type. A new facet of Molière, Racine, or an outstanding living member of the French Academy "makes the front page" in France much more readily than news about a prominent politician or a star of the athletic or theatrical world.

[1] Knauer, K. von, "Die Bedeutung sprachlicher Angelelegenheiten in der französischen Öffentlichkeit," *Die neueren Sprachen,* 1935, 7/8 Heft, SS. 283-293.

Small wonder that the nation which believes in the supreme value of reason and in the supreme importance of intellectual discipline has developed a language characterized by a high degree of lucid simplicity and elastic clarity. The French language, as a result, has been adopted as a convenient medium for international intercourse, the accepted medium of translation, oral or written. This position the French language occupied without challenge for over two centuries, during which period the French text of international treaties was the final and authoritative one in all cases of dispute. The formal international supremacy of the French language in the diplomatic field came to an end with the Treaty of Versailles, when France had to yield to the demand of her English-speaking allies and accepted the English text as no less valid than the French.[1] The recent Franco-Soviet Treaty of Mutual Assistance also carries a clause stipulating that the French and Russian texts be held of equal validity.

It may be of interest to recall the apotheosis of the French language to be found in the *Memorandum on the Universality of the French Language,* offered by Antoine de Rivarol in 1783 to the Prussian Academy of Sciences in competition for a prize for the best paper on the subject, "What Is It That Has Made the French Language a Universal Tongue? What Is the Justification of the Claim on the Part of the French Language to Such a Position? Is It to Be Presumed that the French Language Will Preserve Its Privileged Position?"

> "What distinguishes the French language from other languages, ancient and modern, is the structure of our sentence; it is always direct and necessarily clear. The French always put the subject first, then the verb which stands for

[1] Temperley, H. W. V., *A History of the Peace Conference of Paris,* New York, Oxford University Press, 1920, Vol. I, pp. 253 f.

an action of the subject, and only after this comes the object toward which the action is directed. Such is the sequence prescribed by logic and common sense. Now, this sequence so necessary for the clarity of reasoning is inimical to emotionalism; emotionalism would name first the object that arouses a sensation. This is why the people who are swayed by sentiments do not follow the direct, logical structure of the sentence, but indulge in more or less haphazard construction, as emotion may direct them. This manner is prevalent in the world, because men are inclined to follow the voice of passion rather than that of reason. . . .

"The French language alone has remained a personification of reason, as it were, thanks to the unique gift of the French people, which consists in not deviating from the direct, logical structure of the sentence. . . . It is in vain that passions agitate us and incite us to adopt the emotional order of sentence structure. The French syntax remains incorruptible and implacable. Such is that admirable source and the presiding genius of the French tongue. What is not clear is not French. What is not clear may be English, Italian, even Greek or Latin; but it cannot be French. . . . One may say that the French language is of geometrical nature, that it is formed of straight lines; while curves and their infinite variations characterized the formation of Greek and Latin. Our language regulates and leads the thought; other languages permit it to deviate, to slide into the maze of emotions and to follow all the whims of poetic longing for mystic harmony. As such, other languages may be marvelous instruments for misty pronouncements of an oracle, which our tongue would not tolerate at all. Dependable, reasonable, and

sociable, our language is not any longer the French language, but is the language of mankind." [1]

Because of the inflexible logic of their tongue the French are particularly sensitive to the illogic of other languages which are colored by emotional imagination. An American guest at the court of Napoleon III, Mrs. Charles Foulton, *"la belle Américaine,"* records the following complaint made by the Marquis de Galiffet in the course of a luncheon conversation, the subject of which was typically French—the logic of languages:

"The Marquis told me that one day while traveling by train in England he stuck his head through the open window the better to view the landscape, which had attracted his attention. A fellow-passenger called out to him, 'Look out!' The Marquis, translating this remark, logically, as an equivalent to *regardez dehors* (look outside) obediently protruded himself further through the window. 'Look out!' the Englishman repeated, with more impatience in his voice. Irritated, the Marquis replied: 'I am already looking outside, as you can see!' 'Look inside, then,' shouted the Englishman, pulling from the window the uncomprehending fellow-passenger. 'How do you expect me to learn such an illogical language?' concluded the Marquis." [2]

According to Voltaire, the French language has made more conquests for France than Charlemagne. It is still making friends for France among those who are familiar with the peculiar advantages of the French tongue, of which the pri-

[1] Rivarol, A. de, *Mémoire sur l'universalité de la langue française.*

[2] "Une Américaine à la Cour de Napoléon III," *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 15 mai 1935, pp. 402-403.

mary is, perhaps, the high rationalistic art that it possesses and teaches, the summarizing of multifarious and complex facts and ideas in a few words of imposing clarity and simplicity. This superb art has made France a kind of intellectual middleman for the world. What Hippolyte Taine has said with regard to the art of La Bruyère is true of the standards of French literature in general:

> "His talent consists primarily in his ability to attract attention. His originality consists in the power of marking with an indelible impress whatever he touches. When he says but common verities, you will never forget them again, once you have heard him say them. His style is irresistible, like the hand of a strong man who seizes a passer-by by the collar; he makes people listen to him, forgetting their business and their pleasures." [1]

THE RATIONALISTIC SOCIABILITY

Even a brief study of the nature of French rationalism would be incomplete without an analysis of the French genius for sociability. It is said that one of the surest ways of knowing a man is to watch with whom he associates and how willingly. Let us consider, then, however briefly, what peculiarities the French show in the fundamental companionships of everyday life, (a) with nature and (b) with living beings, in particular their fellowmen.

The French attitude toward nature is clearly different from the Germanic fraternization and communion with the oversoul; the French are much less inclined to seek God in and through nature. The unforeseeable in nature inspires the rationalist not with awe, but with distrust; it arouses in him a

[1] Taine, H., *Essais de critique et d'histoire,* Paris, Hachette, 1904, p. 12.

desire to control and subdue the forces of nature—the resistance of will rather than the humility of worship.

The rationalist believes that to become a worthy environment for man nature must be tamed (*apprivoisée*); it must be corrected with the help of the light of reason, as the countryside near Paris has been made over into the geometrically arranged parks of Versailles, Vincennes, and St. Cloud. The Frenchman admires nature under control, a compliant instrument. He yields to no man in his admiration for her civil aspects and is inclined to believe with Pascal that man was lost and saved in a garden. On the other hand, the uncontrollable cosmic forces repel the rationalist. Thus Voltaire wrote of the Lisbon earthquake of 1755: "We do not know anything about nature and must fear everything. In vain do we interrogate nature. Nature is dumb. . . ." Renan in the same spirit remarks in his *Recollections:* "The natural tree does not bear good fruit. The fruit is not good until the tree is trained."

Montesquieu, recording in his *Voyages* a journey through the Tyrol, complains:

> "On the whole the scenery here is a sorry sight: mountains covered with snow and for the most part sterile. . . . One moves between two rocky walls; one can see but a small piece of sky above, and this last exasperatingly narrow. It is here that I have found the solution of the riddle coined by Vergil:
>
> *'Dic, quibus in terris, et eris mihi magnus Apollo,*
> *Tres pateat Coeli spatium non amplius ulnas.'"* [1]

Queen Marie of Poland, the daughter of Louis XV, describes Plombières in the Vosges as a country on the whole very un-

[1] Montesquieu, *Voyages* (Collection Bordelaise), Bordeaux, G. Gounouilhou, 1896, t. II, pp. 134, 137.

even and disagreeable to see. She found the Pyrenees "very much like the inferno except that at Cauterets one freezes to death." Bagnères and Barèges, she writes, "are two hideous localities lost among the horrible ravine."

Again Voltaire, while building his residence at Ferney at the foot of the Jura, wrote Argental that the country was delightful, "if one does not turn one's gaze in the direction of the ice-covered mountains." Madame de Staël, though influenced by Schelling's *Naturphilosophie,* never really shared in his adoration of nature. A rationalistic individualist, Madame de Staël could not faithfully subscribe to Schelling's pantheistic apotheosis of nature as "the holy and eternally creative, aboriginal force of the universe"; neither could she truly hail Schelling's idea of abstract immortality, the immortality through the dissolution of the individual soul in the "world soul." [1]

In the *Chanson de Roland* no description is given of the impressive Pyrenean landscape, though this would have been a worthy setting for the story of the heroic death of Roland; the rationalistic bard, "a true Frenchman, was interested in man only." [2] The same trait is exhibited by the French chroniclers of the World War. They seldom refer to nature except in the most matter-of-fact connections. Marshal Joffre makes the barest mention of natural forces, as when he writes of the retreat to the Marne: "It was terribly hot and we thought how hard it must be on our soldiers." [3] The celebrated French aviator, young Captain Georges Guynemer, showed the same restraint. In the two hundred letters from the front, recently published by his family, he made the single observation, "Splen-

[1] Cf. Baker, G. M., "Madame de Staël's Attitude Toward Nature," *Sewanee Review,* January, 1931, p. 62.
[2] Lanson, G., *Histoire de la littérature française, cit.,* p. 30.
[3] Joffre, J., *Mémoires,* Paris, Plon, 1932, t. I, p. 360.

did view!" [1] General Dubail in his three-volume work, *Quatre Années de Commandement 1914-1918*, makes no references to nature beyond the barest mention of weather conditions:

> "At half past twelve I went to fort Gironville, where I found General Joffre. The mist was so dense that I could not show him the part of my lines which are perfectly visible in good weather. Artillery droned without the slightest possibility for us to perceive the trend of the battle." [2]

The rationalist has no feeling of companionship for uncorrected, untamed nature, which presents many phenomena unreasonable and undesirable from the rational point of view. He is convinced that civilization consists primarily in correcting nature and that it came into being and has been developing thanks only to man's power of invention and organization. Small wonder, then, that the French nation has led in correcting and beautifying, that is to say ennobling, many important functions of man's daily life, notably, eating and dressing.

It is this rationalistic tendency to control and correct nature that has made the French the inventors of manners, above all of table manners; in other words, certain forms of control bearing upon some of those original tendencies which we have in common with the lower animals. It is not a mere hedonistic foible, but also a rationalistic desire for triumph over raw nature, that has made France the classical land of good eating and suave drinking. The secret of her art is inventive imagination, and above all, taste—a sense of measure and a long search for gustatory harmonies. Willa Cather has drawn a delightful

[1] Bordeaux, H., "Le Chevalier de l'air: George Guynemer," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1er mars 1918, pp. 542-579.

[2] Paris, Fournier, 1920-21, t. I, p. 169.

picture of two French missionaries, who, living in the wilderness of a foreign land, recapture the fine flavor of French civilization in a Christmas dinner. Her good bishop salutes the traditional onion soup, so richly French in its smooth complexity, with pious thanksgiving:

> "When one thinks of it, a soup like this is not the work of one man. It is the result of a constantly refined tradition. There are nearly a thousand years of history in this soup."[1]

Inventors of particularly savory, wholesome *plats*—or shall we say composers of charmingly haunting dietetic rhapsodies?—are honored in France, when known, by the apposition of their last name to that of the dish, on the menu of all self-respecting restaurants. When the name of the inventor is unknown, the locality which produced the *plat,* because it had produced the inventor, is similarly honored, *e.g., bouillabaisse marseillaise, tripes à la mode de Caen.* His proud and grateful fellow-villagers recently dedicated a monument to Perrin Lamothe of Velaines-en-Barrois, the discoverer of red currant jelly, whose talent had led him to solidify the evanescent tartness of the red-currant-on-the-bush into the familiar invitingly tremulous ruby substance which ennobles, the world over, the wild duck and adds the superior degree of tang and elegance to the turkey herself.

The sense of measure characteristic of the *cuisine française,* it may be observed in passing, is partly responsible for the high average longevity of the French, as well as for the relatively small percentage of stomach diseases in France. The same

[1] Cather, W., *Death Comes for the Archbishop,* New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1927, p. 38.

sense of measure controls drinking. Aversion to strong alcoholic beverages and moderation in the consumption of even light wines is an established French tradition. Popular taste condemns intoxication. Drunkenness, transforming a person into an unreasonable creature, is as repulsive to rationalistic good taste as it is to the puritanic sense of sin.

It is said that Talleyrand once had as his guest a young man still lacking in *savoir-faire*. A fine wine was served with all the ritual prescribed by custom. The young man, eager to show appreciation of the majestic beverage, emptied his glass, and immediately saw by the almost imperceptible shadow on the face of his host that he had committed a blunder. The intimacy of the occasion permitted the young man to ask for enlightenment, and Talleyrand is said to have replied: "A wine like this must first be looked at, then smelled, then tasted, then talked about, and only after that slowly consumed."[1] French policemen who have to deal with quantitative rather than qualitative transgressions of good taste in drinking, usually treat such cases with severity born of the rationalistic contempt for the offense—an attitude very much at variance with the ordinarily lenient and paternal handling of other minor offenses.

The attention, then, which the French give to cooking and to the fine art of drinking at home and abroad, under all circumstances, sad or gay, is not purely hedonistic. The rationalistic belief in the civilizing influence of a good table has played a part in the French emphasis on the pleasures of eating and drinking. With this in mind it is easier to understand M. Raymond Poincaré, who mentions in connection with his first visit

[1] Cf. Lacour-Gayet, G., *Talleyrand,* Paris, Payot, 1930, t. III, p. 325.

to the headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief, General Joffre, during the tense second week of October, 1914: "Next we accompanied the General to the little house in which he lived, where luncheon was served us. Its Spartan sobriety did not exclude culinary excellency."[1] Professor Jules Legras, a French liaison officer at the Russian headquarters, commenting favorably in his *Souvenirs sur la Russie en Guerre* upon the "surprising simplicity" pervading the military headquarters of the Czar, says: "The officers messed together without distinction of rank, several being invited daily, in rotation, to the table of the Emperor, which was charming because of the social ease that the Emperor heartily encouraged." He adds, however: "The Emperor's table was not of a very high quality." When Ivar Kreuger, the international financial wizard of ephemeral glory, committed suicide in his Paris apartment, the reporter of *Le Temps* took occasion to point out in the obituary notice that the ruined financier had cultivated neither *cuisine* (kitchen) nor *cave* (cellar). The remark left the impression that the worst might well have been expected from so uncultivated a man.

The Marquise de Foucault, a courageous and able French woman who clung to her estate in the war zone to the last day possible, seldom forgot to mention in her diary the menu, even on the most poignant days of the war. Thus, on March 30, 1918, at the height of the Ludendorff mass attack, the Marquise, together with her household and as many Staff officers and soldiers stationed at the château as could get away from the grim business of war, went to the Easter service. Having described in moving terms the mass that celebrated in the midst of carnage the Resurrection of the Savior, Madame de Foucault notes:

[1] *Au service de la France, cit.*, t. V, p. 356.

"On returning, I hastily put on a black silk dress, very simple, and go to look after the fires . . . the stove in the great dining-room burning well. I light the table in the middle and at the ends with a great lamp. Dinner menu: Pheasant soup, rabbit sauté chasseur, fried potatoes, preserved figs. Supplies have been short since the beginning of the battle."

When in June, 1918, the Marquise was at length prevailed upon to move her valuables from the château, she writes from a village just beyond the battle zone:

"At the door of the large café aviators come and go. They have a camp near by.

"My window on a very low first floor is just on the level with the seats of the drivers of convoys. Long processions of artillery. Soldiers shout *Bonsoir* to me very familiarly. All night the noise of the passing continues under my window.

"Menu: Sorrel soup, eels and ray with black sauce; cauliflower maître d'hôtel; filet de porc with Madeira sauce, very good strawberries and cream." [1]

M. René Chambe in a war reminiscence entitled "Those Who Have Not Come Back" (*Ceux qui ne sont pas revenus*) has given a graphic description of a French officers' mess on the Lorraine front in September, 1918. It was an aviation unit and the daily losses of the squadron were usually known by luncheon. The inflexible preservation of the traditional amenities through the racking uncertainties of warfare is an impressive witness to the nobility of spirit which rationalism is capable of engendering:

[1] *Château at the Front,* Boston, 1931, pp. 229, 240, 318; used by permission of, and by special arrangement with, Houghton Mifflin Co.

"The orderly in charge of the mess enters. He is obviously frightened and dejected. He holds a piece of paper in his hand and he is looking for someone. The junior member of the mess must read the menu with due ceremony and welcome the group to the table. Where is Lieutenant Colbert? He is not there; he is dead. Has the next youngest, Midshipman Grand, also fallen? . . . Who, then, is the youngest among those present? Someone directs the orderly to the youngest member present. He mechanically takes from the orderly the menu, and then suddenly turns pale. Silently, he rustles the paper with his fingers. He looks around and meets the eyes of the commanding officer; one must gather up his self-control and dominate his grief. Individuals pass away, but the tradition must be kept alive. The junior officer rises. The white sheet of paper scarcely trembles between his fingers. For the last time, his eyes turn to the commanding officer for confirmation. The latter nods. Then, erect, standing at attention, the young lieutenant pronounces the ritualistic formula in a firm voice: 'Major, gentlemen! It is my privilege to read for you the menu of the day.' He reads and his voice betrays no trepidation. Next, with three short bows, he salutes first the Major, and then his comrades at the right and at the left, who all return the salute. Though his throat is contracted, he succeeds in concluding: 'Good appetite, Major! Good appetite, gentlemen!' At last he can sit down. Life continues on its way." [1]

The position of legislator of fashions held by Paris is to be understood also in the light of the rationalistic desire to control,

[1] *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15 avril 1933, pp. 856 f.

correct, and embellish nature. "Fashion in dress," Mlle. Antoinette has well observed in Princess Bibesco's essay, *Noblesse de robe,* "saves us from fatigue by affording relaxation and recreation for the eye." The problem of fashion is the problem of creating a wide variety of harmonious forms developed from a basic motif, which is constantly renewed and modified. That problem is solved "by an *élite* of women in Paris who, as is the case of all other kinds of *élite,* are not numerous, their number being limited by the rarity of genius." The instruments of work—a few pieces of cloth, scissors, pins, and the large wooden dolls—are as simple as the art of design, the strict sense of harmony, and the will to succeed are great. These efforts and talents have given Paris the well-deserved position of unquestioned dictator of fashions for several centuries past. Princess Bibesco notes that a London museum counts among its treasures a collection of "French dolls of fashion." The catalogue states that the dolls were used to introduce French fashions into England about 1675. This was at the time of the great naval struggle between Louis XIV and William of Orange, yet every three months a vessel loaded with these little figurines would leave the French shores and the English Navy would receive an order to cease firing until it passed the danger zone. As soon as the ladies of fashion reached the coast, they were distributed throughout the kingdom, to capture the English world of fashion without the firing of a shot.[1]

The average Frenchman shows in his everyday relationship with other living beings a disposition very much in harmony with his rationalistic attitude toward inanimate nature.

Someone has said that women, cats, and elephants are the only animals with sense. Is it in view of the impracticability of attempting to surround himself with elephants that the

[1] Bibesco, Princess M. L., *Noblesse de robe,* Paris, Grasset, 1928, pp. 9-18.

Frenchman shows so strong a preference for the cat, most luxurious, rationalistic, and least mystically inclined of the domestic animals, and that among his fellow-creatures his preference is for women of intellect? Foreign tourists visiting Paris are often struck by the number of servants to be seen in the parks exercising cats. Cats were among Cardinal Richelieu's hobbies.[1] M. Poincaré in his memoirs mentions more than once, during the harassing events of the summer and fall of 1914, his Siamese cat, *"notre fidèle siamois,"* which accompanied the President and his wife in the Bordeaux retreat of the Government.[2]

As for women of intellect and their place in French national life, one illustration may suffice. French women, brilliant and intellectually ambitious, were responsible for the establishment of the *salon,* that powerful social institution of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The growth of the influence of the *salon,* as pictured, for example, by Charles Louis Livet in *Précieux et précieuses: charactères et moeurs du XVII^e siècle* and in *Portraits du grand siècle,* and by a series of studies on the illustrious women of the seventeenth century,[3] was marked from the beginning by the ascendancy of women of wit and acumen; their influence powerfully contributed to the polishing of both men of the pen and men of the sword. There the

[1] Hanotaux, G., et Duc de la Force, "Histoire de Richelieu—III. Entourage,". *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 1^er juillet 1934, p. 97.

[2] Poincaré, R., *op. cit.,* t. IV, p. 369; t. V, pp. 241 ff.

[3] Cousin, V., *Madame de Longueville,* Paris, Didier, 1859; *Madame de Sable,* Paris, Didier, 1865; *Madame de Chevreuse,* Paris, Didier, 1868; *Madame de Hautefort,* Paris, Didier, 1868.

Cf. Tilby, A. W., "The Distribution of European Genius," *The Nineteenth Century,* July, 1936. The author has tabulated from the *Encyclopedia Britannica* the names of 4,252 "supermen" who have led European civilization for the last 2,500 years, and has grouped them into a series of comparative lists. He finds in the entire catalogue of the great only 131 women. France leads the Continental list with 53 names—one woman to every 22 distinguished men.

art of conversation reached new levels of brilliancy and refinement, characterized by the appreciation of a well-turned phrase, by expressing truth with finesse and courtesy, by being sincere with grace, and by ability to give pleasure even while criticizing. The noblemen learned in the *salon* to respect commoners who were writers, philosophers, and scholars of distinction, and to fraternize with them. The Rambouillet mansion, for example, was open to all men of recognized talent, irrespective of pedigree; for entrée good manners alone were requisite.

What were the topics of conversation in a *salon* of the seventeenth or eighteenth century? Everything under the sun was discussed—literature, theater, war, politics, religion. At a dinner table and in a drawing room, presided over by an adroit and cultured hostess, the standards of literary, political, scientific, and artistic accomplishment were established, ideas were filtered and crystallized, and an unwritten *Who's Who* of the intellectuals was drawn up. Only an earnestly conducted enterprise can bring substantial results; the famous rationalistic women of France who made their *salons* a success possessed not only social charm and finesse, but the capacity for hard work as well. Among Madame de Genlis' reminiscences is found an interesting sidelight on the celebrated Madame Necker's preparation for a social function:

> "The Marquis de Chastellux, invited to Madame Necker's, had arrived a trifle too early and was ushered into the drawing room where he found himself all alone. Walking up and down the room he noticed a small notebook on the floor, under the chair usually occupied by the hostess. The learned nobleman picked up the notebook and opened it. Seeing that it was covered with writing in

Madame Necker's own hand, he began to read it, thinking that he might discover the lady's philosophical ideas. He would never have read it had it been a letter, but a philosophical disquisition one may read—whether invited or not—without any scruples. He discovered that the booklet contained a carefully laid out topical plan for the conversation of the evening. Madame Necker had even written down the little flatteries—bearing upon their works—which she intended to offer to each of the luminaries invited." [1]

The rationalistic instinct for conversation and its civilizing influence has been institutionalized in France. Under the *ancien régime* it found expression in the *salon* and its far-reaching social, cultural, and political influences. Newer times have replaced the *salon* with the *café*, where intellectuals of moderate means gather for an exchange of ideas. Rank outsiders are welcome to listen and to take part in the conversation. Some of the *cafés* of Paris have become centers of literary, philosophical, and political movements. For example, there is the *Café Procope,* which numbered among its customers Descartes, Piron, Voltaire, and Crébillon, and in which Beaumarchais waited for the verdict on the first performance of *The Marriage of Figaro.* In the *Café de la Régence* Voltaire presided, sipping his coffee; here Diderot conversed with his fellow encyclopedists; Franklin, Emperor Joseph II, Robespierre, and Napoleon Bonaparte frequented it. In numerous present-day *cafés* of the Quartier Latin—probably more particularly the *Café de la Rotonde* and *Sous la Coupole*—students from all over the world are solving the

[1] Cf. Goncourt, E. et J., *La femme au XVIII siècle,* Paris, G. Charpentier, 1882.

problems of the day over a cup of coffee or an inexpensive wine. In the early years of the twentieth century some Montmartre and Montparnasse *cafés* were still genuine centers of artistic and literary movements. The rush of modern life and the sad increase of political discord in the literary cults have of late interfered with the purely artistic and literary influence of the *café,* but not, however, with its importance as the instrument of rationalistic sociability, and the home of free, varied conversation:

> "Montmartre and Montparnasse are now only shadows of what they were; the Boulevards, too, have lost much of their character. Voisin's, for instance, is no more. This does not mean that the literary *café* does not exist, but that it is hard to find, and its atmosphere has changed. . . . But the *café,* literary or social, remains fundamentally the same. It is seemingly eternal, and for good reason: 'A man can find everything in a *café,* even happiness.' "[1]

In a recent essay on the literary *cafés,* the purpose and significance of this peculiarly French institution were aptly defined in the following words:

> "Removing the reserve and estrangement between citizens which result from differences of age and social status and which are observed in all other forms of social intercourse, and transforming the mere establishments which sell refreshments into nurseries of friendship—such are the precious contributions of literary *cafés* . . .
>
> "Now, when the raised fist is being substituted for the outstretched hand, and syndicates of hatred throw to the

[1] Wilson, N. S., "The Literary Cafés of Paris," *The Fortnightly* (London), March, 1936, p. 361.

winds cordial ententes, what is going to happen to the literary *café?* It would be a great loss if it should vanish." [1]

The sociability of the rationalist naturally expands in conversation. To say it in the words of Taine:

"The Frenchman likes, by instinct, to be in company, and the reason is that he is well at his ease there. He performs without effort or embarrassment the actions implied in social intercourse. He is free from the painful shyness of his northern neighbor as he is free from the boiling passion of his southern neighbor. He does not have to make an effort to talk, and in his case, there is no natural bashfulness to overcome. As a result, he talks with ease and enjoys conversation. His conception of a good time leads him to seek something fine, light, lively, incessantly renewed and varied, something that can, at one and the same time, stimulate his intellect, tickle his vanity, and exercise the rest of his lovable, sprightly capacities. This he finds only in social intercourse; therefore conversation is his favorite pastime. A very sensitive creature, the attentions and the delicate flattery concomitant with good company are to the Frenchman the atmosphere in which he breathes his lightest. . . . In such a company one can talk freely, because conversation is the means of amusing other people while amusing oneself, and there is no greater pleasure for a Frenchman. A vivid and sinuous conversation is to the Frenchman what flight is to the bird. Naturally alert and stimulated by the impetus of his interlocutors, he slides from one idea to another, traveling by jumps and circuits, with un-

[1] Delorme, H., "Souvenirs des cafés littéraires," *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 15 novembre 1936, p. 382.

expected returns, now soaring high and now almost scraping the ground, changing his position from the highest peaks to the deepest hollows; but never falling into holes nor getting caught in the undergrowth, never asking of the thousand and one subjects he touches in his conversation anything else but to show him and his interlocutors the gay variety of their appearance."[1]

John Stuart Mill recalled with much pleasure the winter at the University of Montpellier which introduced him to "the frank sociability and amiability of French intercourse," and the great amenity which this sociability lent to his daily life. The French character proved "a surprise to him . . . Logical and analytical enough to satisfy even the demands of his own culture, it had also a beauty and grace which were neglected in the Englishmen he knew."[2] Taine well describes the general tone of French conversation, such as Mill doubtless enjoyed at Montpellier and which he missed in England:

"So far as I can judge, the English do not know how to amuse themselves by means of conversation. A Frenchman accounts the happiest moment of his life the period after supper in the private society of well-educated and intelligent men. The brains of all present are then in a state of agitation and effervescence. They converse and think in unison about the most exalted subjects, skipping from one to another in short, pithy phrases, and their general ideas, briskly launched, flutter like a swarm of insects. In the space of two hours the untrammelled talk

[1] Taine, H., *Les Origines de la France contemporaine: L'ancien régime,* Paris, Hachette, 1876, t. I, pp. 160 f.

[2] Mill, J. S., *Autobiography,* The World's Classics, New York, Oxford University Press, 1924, pp. 40 ff.; Neff, E., *Carlyle and Mill,* New York, Columbia University Press, 1926, p. 232.

has made the tour of the globe. Each one contributes a condensation of his thoughts in a jesting or serious style, with exaggeration, a dash of paradox and play of fancy, without meaning his sallies to be literally interpreted, and seeking nothing more than a happy relaxation of the mind. Philosophy, science, morals, art, literature, all the treasures of the human intellect, are then handled, not in heavy ingots, or in cumbersome sacks, but in pretty, portable coins, beautifully engraved and sparkling and jingling with a cheerful clink, as they are lightly manipulated by delicate fingers. It seems to me that these coins are rare in England, and that, in addition, they are not current. They are regarded as too thin; their alloy gives rise to suspicions. Far more readiness is shown in handling the rough and ponderous metal of which I have already spoken. The conversation indulged in is chiefly instructive; most frequently there is no conversation at all. Several inconveniences arise from this, and tedium is one of them; the mind wants entertainment." [1]

Having now sketched the nature of French rationalism and its instruments, let us turn to the study of the problem that interests us above all, how this key-characteristic of the French national psychology, rationalism, influences the behavior of the Frenchman as a political being. In such an investigation one is, again, greatly assisted by the French love of analysis—that sort of "mental chemistry," as Taine called it, which singles out and reduces to revealing simplicity the component elements of a complex psychological body. The French, may it be reiterated, willingly analyze themselves, as individuals and as a nation, with a high degree of detachment.

[1] *Notes on England,* New York, Henry Holt and Co., 1876, pp. 321 f.

Chapter V

THE RATIONALIST AS A POLITICAL BEING

ELOQUENCE IN PUBLIC LIFE

THE French, as a nation, have not escaped the nets of the designer of evil who, to repeat again Defoe's phrase, "matches proper sins for every nation."

The French passion for the "right word" (*juste mot*) is reflected in the national fondness for definition. Even writers of fiction interrupt their stories to flourish a definition—which is, of course, an excellent mental habit when practiced in moderation. Thus a writer relating a gripping war story stops at a poignant moment to define the brutality of death as "sudden incommunicability." A general of the World War lays a second claim to national consideration by defining the ideal headquarters of an army as "a remote centrality," and Captain Georges Guynemer coined the happy definition: "My aeroplane is but a flying machine gun."[1]

M. Paul Valéry, eulogizing Marshal Pétain on the occasion of the distinguished soldier's reception by the French Academy, while he praised the military talents and civic virtues of the savior of Verdun, did not forget to compliment the Marshal on the ability to crystallize his military thought in felicitous and instructive formulas:

[1] Bordeaux, H., "Le chevalier de l'air," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1er mars 1918, p. 61.

"You have the power of summing up your thought in gripping formulas, such as: 'The offensive is an advancing fire, while the defensive is a stopping fire'; 'the cannon conquers, the infantry occupies a ground.'" [1]

On the other hand, as is natural for a rationalist, the Frenchman is little given to the cultivation of inward experiences, to mystic or semi-mystic brooding and speculation, which can fill, agreeably, many an hour of the German's leisure. The Frenchman delights in conversation, not only because he seeks exercise for the instruments of reason—thinking and speech—nor simply because he enjoys the play of wit and verbal finesse, but also because he craves a tangible and yet subtle form of externalization to occupy his leisure moments. In public life, the Frenchman is intrigued by eloquence and falls an easy prey to subtle, elegant oratory; his reasoning power and his rigid logic can be seriously weakened under the spell of a brilliant *discours*. And though it is true that no one can fool all the people all the time, fooling a substantial number of the people at the psychological moment of a general election, throws the door open to political agitation, against which her very rationalism disarms France at times.

The Frenchman's fondness for rhetoric manifests itself variously in public life. Parisian newspapers announced, for instance, at the opening of the theatrical season in October, 1929, that the Minister of Public Instruction and Fine Arts had issued a decree re-establishing the lectures at the *Odéon*, a State dramatic theater. These lectures on French literature, given by distinguished critics before each performance, had been in abeyance since the World War. "The Parisian pub-

[1] "Réponse au remerciement du Maréchal Pétain, discours prononcé le 22 Janvier 1931," *Oeuvres complètes*, Editions de la N. R. F., Paris, *s. d.*, t. 5, p. 57.

lic," explained *Le Temps*,[1] "demanded its ration of eloquence." Molière has well described this rationalistic longing in the dialogue of Mercury and Sosie.

"—'What is your destiny, tell me?'
—'It is to be man and to speak.'" [2]

Henri Frédéric Amiel, the outstanding Swiss student of French literature, observed that French tragedy seems to be designed to make action merely a suitable occasion for fervid oratory, by extracting elaborate discourses from the characters. "What is really curious and amusing," remarks Amiel, "is that the liveliest, gayest, and wittiest of peoples should always have understood the grand style in the most formal and pompous fashion." The rationalistic craving for externalization tends to make the French drama, in the words of Amiel, "an oratorical tournament." [3]

When the Frenchman speaks of talent without any further qualifications, he means the talent for speaking, "this mixture of intelligence, sensitivity, and imagination which makes one's speech vivid, warm, gripping, sharp in relief." [4] As a result, French government and French administration of justice are in a large degree subject to rhetoric, alas! not always of beneficent purpose or effect. It is rightly said that oratory is in France what games and sports are in England. The Frenchman is addicted to rhetoric; [5] on the slightest provocation he

[1] 24 octobre 1929.
[2] *Amphitrion, Acte I, Scène 2.*
[3] Amiel, H. F., *The Intimate Journal,* New York, The Macmillan Company, 1935, p. 171.
[4] Arnould, L., "Le Professeur de Faculté," *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 1er juin 1935, pp. 629 f.
[5] M. André Tardieu, in his recent searching study of the organic weaknesses of the French political institutions quotes Bismarck's observation: "You can easily enough administer 25 strokes of cane to a Frenchman, provided that

launches upon the discourse so happily exploited in French comedy, and as a juryman or a voter he cannot resist eloquent speech. A really eloquent lawyer is assured of excellent earnings and an eloquent senator or member of the Chamber of Deputies, short of having committed a grave misdemeanor, can be sure of re-election by one constituency or another, or even by several constituencies at one and the same time, each proud of connecting its name with that of a political celebrity. France is the country where the life of a cabinet not infrequently hangs upon parliamentary oratory. The late M. Clemenceau has repeatedly employed this dangerous recourse, to win for himself the redoubtable name of tiger and wrecker of cabinets. More than once his brilliant oratory succeeded in wrecking a cabinet on a comparatively secondary issue.

In most countries the finished politician rates personal appearance as a considerable factor in the matter of public appeal; he "dresses up" or "dresses down" to his audience. In France the politician can limit himself to cultivating his oratory. Prince von Bülow, while German ambassador in France, wrote in his diary:

> "Gambetta's . . . appearance was strikingly neglectful. His evening dress was poorly cut, his shirt puffed out of the waistcoat, his tie was crisscross. This would have hurt him in England, where considerable importance is attached to a man's appearance, so that Disraeli predicted a splendid career to a new M.P. on the ground that he 'wore his monocle like a gentleman.' The French do not pay much attention to the looks of a man, but so much the more are they attracted by his oratorical talent. The

you make at the same time a *beau discours* on human liberty and dignity." (*La Révolution à refaire: Le Souverain captif,* Paris, Flammarion, 1936, p. 275.)

Germans are indifferent to both, but rate a public man on the ground of his moral solidity and his philosophical attitude." [1]

When in January, 1912, M. Raymond Poincaré tried to persuade his friend M. Léon Bourgeois, a well-poised, capable, and experienced senator, to accept the office of Prime Minister, M. Bourgeois declined, because he knew his limitations as an orator:

"'No, no,' he repeated, 'I know my limitations. I am not good enough as an orator to fulfil properly the role of the head of the government before a Chamber that is far from quiet.'" [2]

The outbreak of the World War found the office of Prime Minister occupied by M. René Viviani, who was M. Poincaré's companion on the state visit to Russia in July, 1914, of which the late President of the Republic writes:

"Off and on M. Viviani and myself have had conversations on the deck of the cruiser *La France,* in which literature alternated with politics and diplomacy. My interlocutor, who has an amazing memory, knows by heart whole pages of prose and poetry, and in particular long passages from great orations, with which he nourishes his own eloquence." [3]

One of the most accomplished orators ever heard by a French political assembly, M. Viviani owed his elevation to the post of Prime Minister not in small measure to his oratorical gifts. He proved, however, hardly adequate as leader of the nation,

[1] "M. de Bülow à Paris," *Revue de Paris,* 15 juin 1931, p. 777.
[2] Poincaré, R., *Au service de la France,* Paris, Plon, 1926-1933, t. I, p. 15.
[3] *Ibid.,* t. IV, p. 225.

when the exigencies of the war demanded speedy, determined, and fruitful action.[1] Viviani's more or less silver-tongued successors, Briand, Millerand, Ribot, Painlevé were tried in turn and order and found wanting; they were not doers. True, France has always found among her eloquent public men those who were also able men of action, such as Thiers, Gambetta, Waldeck-Rousseau, Clemenceau, and Poincaré. She has survived misgovernment at the hands of her nightingales of the rostrum, but she has paid a heavy price.

THE WITCHERY OF FORMULAS

The French are inclined, as might be expected from rationalists, to all the excesses of Cartesianism (*les pêchés du cartésianisme*). One of these is the exaggerated belief, on the part of the masses, in the power of leaders to solve intricate problems of social life by a simple rationalistic formula, by some political credo, possessing the deceptive appearance of quasi-mathematical neatness and exactitude. Thus the celebrated triad "Equality, liberty, fraternity" (*égalité, liberté, fraternité*), because of its deceptive simplicity and clarity, has served to perpetuate the social unrest for which it was designed as the universal panacea. Omitting *fraternité*—that grotesque production of the cruel hysteria and demagogy of the Revolution—the Frenchman's conception of liberty and equality has an absolutistic leaning. He has a tendency to demand for himself or for his group unqualified liberty and

[1] M. Henri Leyret, relating in "Delcassé parle . . ." *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 15 septembre 1937, the fall of Viviani's cabinet in October, 1915, states: "Because of lack of character and an excessive confidence in his rhetorical powers and in his star, which, he imagined, eclipsed those of the heavens, M. Viviani fell."

equality. The rights of other individuals and social groups are apt to be overlooked in the rationalistic excitement over the mathematical-looking political formula.[1]

An ancient writer described the Gauls as passionate for two things, warfare and subtle speech.[2] Of these two Gallic passions, the first, though inherited by the French, has certainly been corrected to the vanishing point by the experience of centuries. The French have achieved military glory more than once in the course of their history, but they have come to see the ruinous cost and the instability of that glory. The self-restraint shown by the French nation after the World War in her reluctance to display military force as an answer to manifestations of unfriendliness on the part of Germany, even when Germany's military strength was still quite restricted, prior to the re-establishment of the conscript army by Hitler in March-May 1935, clearly attests to the distance created, by the passage of years, between the France of Louis XIV and Napoleon, and the contemporary bourgeois Third Republic. On the other hand, the Frenchman's rationalistic, his almost superstitious, belief in the efficacy of formulas and his weakness for verbal subtleties are exhibited even at the battle front.

M. Jean Pierrefeu, the able and frank private annalist of the French Great General Headquarters has more than once remarked that to make a success on the general staff one must display the gift of casuistic argumentation and oratory at staff meetings. While all belligerents of necessity resort to coloring

[1] Cf. Faure, E., *The Spirit of the Forms,* New York, Harper & Brothers, 1930, p. 180.

[2] *Duas res industrissime persequitur gens Gallorum, rem militarem et argute loqui.* Cato in *Hist. rom. frg., 34.*

unwelcome news, any impartial student of the World War *communiqués* would award the French the palm for euphemistic elegancies. At the beginning of the German attack on Verdun, for which the French High Command was poorly prepared, the initial shock of the rapid capture of forts reputed impregnable was soon followed by the evacuation of Woëvre, a strategic position of great importance on the right bank of the Meuse. The breaking to the French nation of this sad news is described in the following terms by M. Jean Pierrefeu, a journalist attached to the General Headquarters, whose task it was to prepare drafts of the *communiqués* for the approval of the Commander-in-Chief or the Chief of Staff:

"This retreat was announced to the public in subtle and elegant terms. The version suggested by the Third Section [the Section of Operations] showed me once again that good military education must comprise an advanced training in casuistry. One of the officers of the Third Section, Major F., whom I always regarded as particularly able, proposed this formula: 'The advanced lines which we had kept at Woëvre since the operations of the last year and which had been employed as observation posts, were now moved closer to the high bank of the Meuse for reasons of a military nature.' Accustomed though I was, from professional experience, to the play of euphemisms, I could not help admiring the skill of this dressing of a terrible piece of news—a dressing that was calculated to satisfy the logical trend of mind of the Frenchman, who would not be shocked at a *communiqué* provided that it had the appearance of fully explaining to him the situation. The formula was, however, slightly modified in the final version in which, to my regret, the fascinating phrase,

'for reasons of a military nature,' was replaced with 'by order of the High Command.'" [1]

What is particularly interesting is that the high priests of the general staff employed the same subtle rhetorical dressing in announcing sad events to yet higher priests of the military hierarchy. Thus, the Staff of the Second Army, commanded by General Castelnau, who had almost lost the city and the fortified region of Nancy in August, was, in October, 1914, on the point of losing Lille. While he was supposed to be launching an attack between the Oise and the Somme, this general was actually ceding ground instead of advancing. The General, a very brilliant military *raisonneur,* however inapt on the field of battle, telephoned this casuistic report to the Commander-in-Chief:

"Nothing new last night. Fouquescourt was evacuated because bulging. No changes in the north."

To which General Joffre made the stinging reply that for the third time the Second Army "had rectified the front by retreat." [2] At the end of January, 1915, Joffre undertook an operation against the Germans into Champagne, in which the principal role fell to the Fourth Army, commanded by General de Langle. The operation was unsuccessful; no territory was gained from the Germans, but some was lost when the Germans retaliated by a counter-attack. General de Langle in his elegantly written report to Joffre blamed the failure on bad weather and the poor condition of the roads. Joffre's well-justified repartee was: "If it rained on our side of the trenches, it rained also on the enemy's." [3]

[1] Pierrefeu, J., *G.Q.G.,* Paris, Crès, 1933, t. I, p. 128.
[2] Joffre, J., *Mémoires,* Paris, Plon, 1932, t. I, pp. 450 f.
[3] *Ibid.,* t. II, p. 58.

It should be noted, however, that the orders of the day were written in terms of utmost simplicity and with a complete suppression of all casuistry as well as of the Napoleonic oratory. Thus General Joffre's order for the battle of the Marne runs as follows:

> "At the moment when the battle begins, upon the issue of which depends the fate of the country, I wish to remind each and every one that there must be no retreat. No effort must be spared to push the enemy back. If a detachment should be unable to advance, it must hold the terrain at all costs and let itself be killed on the spot rather than retreat. Under the conditions of this moment no faintness can be tolerated." [1]

It remains true that the "manner of presenting things" plays a great part in French life. According to a typical anecdote, the mother of five-year-old Pierre had just told the boy a fairy tale. "And you, mother," Pierre inquires, "do you like to hear fairy tales?"—"Yes, my darling."—"Good, I will tell you one! It is very short. Once upon a time there was a jug, and I broke it." It is recorded that the ingenious Pierre was forgiven. The *enfants terribles* of French politics understand the nation's weakness only too well and exploit it through the medium of slogans and impassioned rhetoric; they have developed a high degree of skill in "presenting things." Honorable public men are also forced to take recourse in slogans and formulas. Many political formulas and slogans, well-meant and otherwise, have left a profound impress, positive or negative, on the history of modern France.

The great triad of the Revolution, "Equality, liberty, fraternity," was seconded by the celebrated pamphlet of Sieyès,

[1] Joffre, J., *Mémoires,* Paris, Plon, 1932, t. I, pp. 394 f.

with an inciting title cast in triple formula: "What is the Third Estate? Everything. What part has it in Government? Nothing. What does it want? To become something." On December 3, 1792, Robespierre declared: "Louis must die in order that the Republic may live." As France remained hesitant, Barrère de Vieuzac thundered a new incitement: "The tree of liberty will not grow unless watered with the blood of kings!" Chamfort contributed the formula justifying the Reign of Terror a slogan later to be used by the Bolshevists: "Peace to hamlets, war on castles and palaces!"

Napoleon I, who was himself a past master at coining slogans and formulas, became in turn the victim of a phrase, when Talleyrand celebrated Napoleon's defeat in Russia as "the beginning of the end." To reconcile the public to the restoration of the unpopular Bourbons in the person of the exiled Louis XVIII, the royalists coined the slogan: "Nothing is changed in France; there is only one Frenchman the more." To this formula the Bonapartists replied by striking a medal to celebrate the arrival of the first giraffe in Paris, which was coincident to the restoration of the Bourbons, countering with the legend: "Nothing is altered in France; there is only one beast the more." Napoleon III was materially helped in his accession to the throne and the establishment of the Second Empire on the ruins of the short-lived Second Republic by the slogan, "The Empire, it is peace," a fallacious promise but one which went right to the heart of the conservative middle-class Frenchman.

Pierre Joseph Proudhon, the socialist and the founder of the theory of anarchism, promoted the cause of communism in France with his formula, "Property is theft," which was a modification of the more moderate formula of the Girondist Brissot, "An exclusive property is a theft from nature." The

French communistic regime of 1871, like its more lasting progeny, the Bolshevist regime in Russia, profited by this slogan; but, on the other hand, the red flag of the Paris Commune was the target of Lamartine's slogan: "The tricolor has been round the world; the red flag has only been round the Champ de Mars." Thiers contributed to the stabilization of the Third Republic the formula: "The republican form of government is the one that divides us least." Gambetta's political success was nourished in no small degree by his demagogic catchword, "Clericalism; that is the enemy." Much grist has been brought to the political mills of the present-day Radical Socialist party by such pronouncements as these:

"Radicalism is a doctrine which takes science as a guide and morals as the goal."

"With us, politics is the art of serving men and not of exploiting them."

"Our basis is scientific observation, our goal is moral good. Between these poles we evolutionize."

"Our rule is, march forward, understand, and act." [1]

Among recent political formulas should be mentioned M. Poincaré's, "Security, arbitration, disarmament," which has served to crystallize the post-war international policy of France on the basis of reliable guarantees of security and arbitration. This convincing formula has effectively prearmed the French public against the visionary or dishonest propaganda of pseudo-pacifists, who would sacrifice the national defense of France to the perilous mirage of international peace without solid guarantees.[2]

[1] Fels, Comte de, "Lettre à un futur Président du Conseil," *Revue de Paris,* 15 janvier 1934, pp. 241-254.

[2] *See* also the discussion of the role of eloquence, in particular of formulas and slogans, in private and public life of the French in Wechsler, E., *Esprit und Geist,* Verlag von Velhagen & Klasing, Leipzig, 1927, SS. 360 ff., 540 ff.

The liking for neat, mathematical-looking formulas of conduct is not confined to politics. French philosophers also seek firm ground in a formula. Thus Descartes summed up the basis of his metaphysics of existence in the celebrated epigram, "I think, consequently I exist"; Maine de Biran chose the formula, "I will, consequently I exist"; the substance of Bergson's metaphysics is the thought, "I am capable of intuition, consequently I exist." Small wonder then that a young philosopher, educated in the schools of his nation, wrote from the front on the eve of an engagement from which he was not to return, simply these words: "Dear Mother and Grandmother. We are off. Courage. Wisdom and Love." [1]

It is, however, in public life and in politics that the witchery of formulas and slogans exercises a truly far-reaching and at times sinister influence, even though sometimes the politicians' witchery of formulas turns out to be a boomerang. Of France it might well be said, to transpose the Latin proverb, *acta volant, verba manent.* A politician's actions are soon forgiven or forgotten, but a phrase made by him or about him frequently becomes a part of him, as if branded on his flesh—an indelible attribute which he carries to the grave.

There is some justice in this, to be sure. If a politician can achieve success with the help of a happy formula, it is only natural that a formula which proves blatantly false should be registered against him. The following illustrations go to show that good men are sometimes blasted by an inadvertent phrase:

> "Take the case of M. Emile Ollivier. . . . To this very day, the masses ignore that it was he who proclaimed war with Prussia, but there is scarcely a child who does not

[1] *Letters of a Soldier,* 1914-1916, London, Constable and Co., 1917, p. 190.

know that he said 'he contemplated the coming struggle with a light heart.' Ridicule kills in France, and M. Ollivier is ridiculous. It is all over with him. M. Jules Favre was a great orator, and for that reason one of the ornaments of his century. This is forgotten. He signed the disastrous conditions of peace dictated by Bismarck. That might have been overlooked. But he had said beforehand that 'not one inch of territory, not one stone of any French fortress, would be yielded.' This sentence was his political knell. General Ducrot was a brave soldier. On leaving Paris to go and attack the Prussians, he was so ill-advised as to declare that he would return 'dead or victorious.' However, he was still more ill-advised to come back alive and vanquished. Here was another only fit to throw overboard." [1]

ELOQUENCE VERSUS CHARACTER

Subject to the power of expression and valuing it above all other gifts, the French are poorly equipped for assaying the character of their public men. The intangibilities of personality are baffling to the rationalist; these intangibilities verge on the mystical. As a result, into the leading group of public men in France often penetrate individuals of unstable or even corrupt character. Investigation of such scandals as the extensive embezzlements of Oustric, Mme. Hanau, and Stavisky in recent years has uncovered questionable practices on the part of a number of the high officials of the State.

This rationalistic inaptitude for guessing and judging the character of a man, in abstraction from his degrees, diplomas,

[1] O'Rell, M. (Blouët, P.), *English Pharisees, French Crocodiles, and Other Anglo-French Typical Characters*, Toronto, 1892, pp. 220 ff.

and address, has cost the French nation dearly. A poignant example is afforded by General Joffre's account of the failure of the attack on the German center in late August, 1914. Having recorded the plan of attack and the momentary success of the Fourth Army in its offensive of August 21, he writes:

> "On the morning of August 25, it became clear that the strategic manoeuver prepared by us since the 18th had resulted in a complete failure. . . . It was necessary to find out why, in spite of the numerical superiority that I believed I had assured our armies, the major attack attempted by us between Longwy and Sambre had been so utterly frustrated through tactical insufficiencies.
>
> "However painful it is to reveal certain weaknesses, it is necessary to disclose without reserve all that we came to see by the end of the operation. In this trial far too many of our generals have shown themselves inferior to their task. Some of these had acquired in time of peace the reputation of brilliancy as professors or map strategists, but proved themselves in the face of the enemy to be dominated by the fear of responsibilities. . . . Their character, as the war experience demonstrated, was not of the calibre demanded by the circumstances." [1]

In this momentous initial defeat of the French, General Lanrezac, Commander of the Fifth Army, played a tragic role. A French student of the World War writes on the authority of Marshal Joffre:

> "Lanrezac scarcely saw anything of his field generals, the commanders of the various corps of his army. . . .

[1] Joffre, J., *op. cit.*, t. I, pp. 281 ff.

Lanrezac spent all his time in his headquarters, with no contact whatsoever with his fighting units. His conception of his command stressed the intellectual side to the exclusion of everything else. The notion had become prevalent before the war that the very vastness of the bodies of troops engaged in a modern war must modify the role of a Commander-in-Chief. He was to be something like the head of an enormous industrial plant, in that he would have no need to go out and watch his workers at first hand." [1]

Colonel E. L. Spears, the liaison officer of the British General Headquarters, who saw General Lanrezac at work during the tense days of the border battles, writes of him:

"Having been a lecturer, and a brilliant one, at the French Staff College, he had contracted the habit of expounding his views before an audience, and rather liked wandering into one of the rooms where the staff were working to expound his impressions and theories. . . .

"Far-sighted he was, and clever, too clever perhaps, and certainly too critical. At Guise he manipulated his units with the consummate skill of an expert at the great game of war, but he played his hand without zest or faith. . . ." [2]

The same observer describes a scene at General Lanrezac's headquarters at Craonne on August 31, 1914, at the height of the retreat of his army. The scene is interesting because characteristic of the rationalist's ability to keep his head under circumstances, however tragic, whose genesis and process he understands. This rationalistic self-control, so characteristic

[1] Recouly, R., *Joffre,* New York, D. Appleton-Century Co., 1931, p. 91.

[2] From *Liaison, 1914,* by Brigadier General Spears, 1931, pp. 94, 275, reprinted with permission by Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., New York.

of Joffre, and of his colleagues as well, proved an invaluable helmet, which no attack could shatter and no disaster corrode.

"Headquarters was installed in the small château where Napoleon stayed, so it was said, a hundred years ago, when attempting to stem the tide of another invasion. I went to the terrace where dinner was being served. It was an ideal situation and a perfect night. The view extended over the Aisne and across the plain to where the lights of Rheims could be seen gleaming 20 miles away. The H.Q. telegraphists had fixed wires and lamps so that the terrace was well lighted. There were two tables. At one sat the General, who had nearly finished dinner. Coffee had been served, and the orderlies had withdrawn. What talking there was went on in undertones. The mellow night, soft, impalpable, velvety, penetrated us all, and in spite of everything we relaxed. Suddenly the voice of Lanrezac was heard. It had a note new to me, soft and cadenced. He was speaking Latin—reciting verse—Horace! And the burden of the lines quoted was: 'Oh, how happy is he who remains at home . . . instead of waging war!'

"A long way to the north a muffled gun boomed, firing its last rounds of the day.

"On every road leading south the endless columns marched on and on without halt and without rest.

"Over Paris a German aeroplane dropped a message announcing the arrival of the enemy in ten days' time." [1]

An exhaustive analysis of this study-room strategist who seems to have proved a rather mediocre man of action is given by Marshal Joffre himself:

[1] From *Liaison, 1914,* by Brigadier General Spears, 1931, pp. 325 ff., reprinted with permission by Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., New York.

"His physical fatigue had exacerbated his caustic critical attitude, which has always been one of his characteristics. He had become hesitant and pusillanimous. Under his deficient leadership his general staff was entirely devoid of team spirit. His personal relations with Sir John French had been gravely prejudicial to Franco-British co-operation.

"I could not help reflecting on his brilliant career in peace time. All his former students and myself, who had him under my orders as a colonel when I was in command of the Sixth Division, had been fascinated by his powerful and brilliant intelligence; while conducting operations on the map, he showed marvelous lucidity, judgment, and a ready mind. It was precisely because I had a high regard for his intelligence that I had made myself the architect of his military fortune, and it was to me that he owed the distinction of finding himself at the head of an army assigned for the most delicate manoeuver.

"When I compared, however, the eulogies of him that I had heard before the war, with the manner in which he behaved in the presence of realities, I was forced, despite my great sympathy for him, to conclude that responsibility crushed him. A brilliant critic of military operation in which he was not an actor, he completely lost his nerve in the presence of the hard experiences of the beginning of this campaign. War, on the other hand, can be conducted only by men who have faith in their success and who by their self-control win the confidence of their subordinates and thus can dominate events. . . .

"What was then my duty? Painful as this was to me and reluctant though I was to dismiss from his post one of the most highly regarded commanding officers, I found

it imperative to change the Commander of the Fifth Army. . . ." [1]

Marshal Joffre's comments upon the dismissal of General Bonneau, commanding officer of the Seventh Army Corps, who was responsible for the unjustified retreat to Nancy on the Alsace-Lorraine front, are of the same import. The Minister of War, M. Messimy, had written to the Commander-in-Chief: "It is the will of the Government that each general who failed to fulfill his duty with sufficient vigor should be immediately court-martialed and executed within twenty-four hours." Conscious, no doubt, of his own failures in the selection of commanding officers, Joffre notes in his diary:

> "The Minister of War whose energy I hold in high regard went a bit too far. In so far as General Bonneau is concerned, he has shown inability to modify his reasoning and conduct from the methods of time of peace to those that are necessary in time of war; his character falls short of that demanded by the present circumstances. It is difficult in time of peace to judge correctly of the character of the man, that quality which is the most essential one in a military commander in time of war. I should have expected to face deficiencies and surprises in this regard. I will dismiss incapable generals and will replace them with younger and more vigorous men." [2]

DOCTRINARIANISM

Among the disconcerting grimaces of rationalism, doctrinarianism holds a prominent place. It is difficult to name a more striking self-contradiction of rationalism than this

[1] Joffre, J., *op. cit.*, t. I, p. 366 f. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 280.

blind and blinding passion for doctrine, which often mars the conduct of national affairs in rationalistic France. "I know my socialists," M. Albert Thomas, Minister of Munitions during the World War, confided to his British and Russian friends, according to the newspapers of the time. "They will shed their blood for a formula. You may accept it and alter its interpretation." The difficulty is increased by the fact that the other political parties are similarly bound by specious phrases. Friendly compromise and co-operation between opposing political parties rarely occurs in France. A. Lawrence Lowell fittingly described this peculiarity of the French mind:

> "The Frenchman is theoretical rather than practical in politics. He is inclined to pursue an ideal, striving to realize his conception of a perfect form of society, and is reluctant to give up any part of it for the sake of attaining so much as lies within his reach. Such a tendency naturally gives rise to a number of groups, each with a separate ideal, and each unwilling to make the sacrifice that is necessary for a fusion into a great party. In short, the intensity of political sentiment prevents the development of real political issues. To the Frenchman, public questions have an absolute rather than a relative or practical bearing, and therefore he cares more for principles and opinions than for facts. This tendency is shown in the programmes of the candidates, which are apt to be philosophic documents instead of statements of concrete policy and, although published at great length, often give a comparatively small idea of the position of the immediate questions of the day. It is shown also in the newspapers, and the use that is made of them. An Anglo-Saxon reads for information about current events, and as

all the papers contain very much the same news, he habitually reads only one. But the French papers contain far less news, and as the Frenchman reads them largely for the sake of the editorials, he commonly reads several in order to compare the opinions they express." [1]

Perhaps in no democratically governed country is there less appreciation of the common-sense point of view that one should profit by the opponent's criticisms; that a reasonable man always owes a part of his success to his friends, but that a still greater part may be due to his enemies.

It was said of the French soldiers of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars that each private carried a marshal's baton in his knapsack. It may be said of the parliamentarians of present-day France that, with rare exceptions, there is a premier's portfolio in the brief case of every ambitious politician—and what politician is not ambitious?—each supplied with some "sure fire" panacea. Moreover, intellectuals, too frequently motivated by a hollow pride in their own acumen, are inclined to be *solitaires,* politically—to disregard party discipline and to underrate or contemn group action. The rationalist is also inclined to seek the limelight for the display of his analytical skill and his flights of oratory. Each one of some sixteen parties represented in parliament has, of course, its own doctrine, its own particular scheme of government if not its own brand of political millennium. Besides, in a numerically small party the average deputy or senator is a greater man than he could hope to be in a large party; in the selection of members of the inevitable coalition cabinets, the specific gravity of his vote is higher, assuring a larger cut

[1] Lowell, A. L., *The Governments of France, Italy, and Germany,* Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1914, pp. 81 ff. Cf. also Barthélemy, J., *Le Gouvernement de la France,* Paris, Payot, 1925.

in government bounties and a livelier hope of grasping some day—if only for a day—a cabinet portfolio. Undesirable as this peculiarity of French politics may be from the point of view of the vital national interests of France, it is a defect inherent in the rationalism of her national genius.

In the vague designations of French political parties it is hard to recognize impeccable logic and lucidity. With the exception of the Communists and Socialists, who wear international labels, French political parties are named in a confusing and contradictory fashion. The 618 seats in the Chamber of Deputies elected in 1936 were distributed among the following parties:

1. *Left.* Communists, Dissident Communists, Socialists, Socialist and Republican Union, Radical Socialists, miscellaneous parties.

2. *Center.* Democratic Left and Independent Radicals, Republican Left and Independent Radicals, Popular Democrats.

3. *Right.* Independent D'Action Populaire, Republican Federation, Republican Independent, Independent Republicans.[1]

The multiplicity of these vaguely differentiated political parties is clearly injurious to the national welfare and the international strength of France. Instability of government and constant danger to the continuity of national policies inevitably result from the leapfrog cabinets, born of the difficulty of maintaining an effective and stable parliamentary majority. When in June, 1936, M. Léon Blum, the Socialist leader, formed a cabinet to succeed that of M. Albert Sarraut, it was the one hundred and first cabinet of the Third Republic; the average life of a French cabinet since September, 1870, has been seven months and twenty days. True, thanks to a non-

[1] The New York *Times*, June 20, 1937.

partisan devotion on the part of the majority of civil-service officials—or because of their inertia and reluctance to change—the better traditions of national administration have been preserved. The civil service has been invaluable ballast that has enabled the ship of State to weather the revolutionary storms and the incessant shifting of cabinets. Lately, however, the civil service itself has been invaded by partisan disorders, civil servants participating in strikes and demonstrations. As a result, the ideal of free government is increasingly compromised in France by selfish or doctrinary politicians and officials.

With this recurrent chaos in French domestic politics, characterized by the inability of French doctrinaires to evolve a solid political organization, the military organization contrasts favorably, on the whole. The experiences of the World War have demonstrated, however, that the French military organization is liable to the characteristic defect of rationalism; while the British are inclined to "muddle through" without evolving any basic plan or major strategy, the French military, not unlike their civilian fellow-citizens, are subject to all the excesses of doctrinarism.

Before the World War the future French commanders, from the designated Commander-in-Chief and his staff officers down to the junior regimental officers, had been educated in the worship of "the offensive at all costs" (*offensive à l'outrance*). The all-important lessons of trench warfare, which might have been derived from the Russo-Japanese War, were utterly neglected under the spell of "the offensive at all costs," that, "raised to the height of a religious frenzy, animated all ranks."[1] With a rash and elegant bravery reminiscent of the

[1] Churchill, W. S., *The World Crisis,* New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931, p. 151.

medieval chivalry, the French army plunged into the first battles of the World War. The infantry, conspicuous in red breeches and blue coats, marched into battle in close formation; the cavalry in glittering array dashed against the German machine guns; and artillery officers in black and gold drew the fire of enemy sharpshooters. The French High Command was brought to the more economical methods of warfare, entrenchment and attack by moving ambush, only after many useless heavy sacrifices.

Analyzing the causes of the defeat of his armies in the border battles of August 7-24, Joffre noted August 24 as follows:

> "The ineptitude of commanding officers of a certain number of units was, evidently, not the only cause of our reverses. It was manifest that the principles of the offensive which we had tried to inculcate in the army before the war had often been poorly understood and poorly applied. From all the points of the front faults of maneuvering were reported to me, which had caused heavy losses and reduced to zero not only the offensive but also the defensive value of the troops. I have been informed that forward units, inspired with a false comprehension of the offensive, went to attack without support of artillery and thus fell, in massive formations, under the enemy's artillery fire. In some other instances, a large unit advanced without having taken measures for the protection of its flanks and found itself exposed to a cruel punishment. The infantry was almost always thrown into the attack at a point too far from the objective. Never were the positions taken from the enemy properly fortified before the forward movement was continued. As a result, the unsuccess of further advance meant that in the retreat the acquisitions

made in the previous movement were lost also. Above all, the co-operation between the artillery and infantry was almost never realized." [1]

In a recent paper contributed to the *Revue des Deux Mondes,* General Debeney, one of the *grands chefs* of the World War, found it necessary to warn the army and the country against the delusions of a new doctrine, which was current at the time in the French army. The new catchword was *Vitesse* (Speed, with a capital S); it was now bruited that the secret of success in the next war would lie in the speed with which motorized and mechanized units could be thrown into action against the weaker points of the enemy lines or marching columns. The new formula was: "The Allies were carried to victory on floods of petroleum." General Debeney warned the military authorities not to succumb to another panacea. He exhorted them not to overlook, in their engrossment with speed, the factor of force, which will largely depend upon heavy artillery.[2]

In the army and navy of each belligerent country, the staff officers form a sort of aristocracy within the body of professional officers and are inclined to give themselves the airs of high priests of the profession. The staff officers of the General Headquarters were prone to be a caste within a caste jealously surrounding the Commander-in-Chief and diminishing, if not entirely precluding, his direct touch with the armed forces under his command. In France, these highest of the military high priests were, at least at the time of Marshal Joffre and his successor General Nivelle, so aggressively obstinate in their doctrinairism as to be strongly disliked by the army in gen-

[1] Joffre, J., *op. cit.,* t. I, pp. 303 f.

[2] Général Debeney, "La motorisation des armées modernes," *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 15 mars 1936, pp. 273-290.

eral; they were nicknamed "Young Turks," the allusion being to the group of doctrinaire revolutionary officers in Turkey who mismanaged national affairs in 1908-1913.

As a curious historical detail relative to doctrinairism in military matters the following story told by M. Jean Pierrefeu may be cited:

> "As is well known, the Germans preluded their offensive of 1918 by shelling Paris with a long-range cannon. The first day it was generally thought that an unnoticed aeroplane had thrown bombs on the capital city. When, however, a shell splinter was found showing the traces of grooving, the question was raised whether the Germans were not using, after all, a long-range cannon.
>
> "The news reached us at the Great General Headquarters during the day of March 23. Immediately, animated discussions were engaged in as to the validity of the hypothesis just mentioned. Naturally, the artillerists were asked to give their opinion. Not one of the artillery officers employed at the Great General Headquarters, several of whom were staff officers (*brevetés*), would take seriously the idea of a German gun shelling Paris. Our particular mess, which counted among its members several superior artillery officers, was the scene of a controversy worthy to be immortalized in an epic poem. Wagers were made by the artillerists, who declared themselves ready to pay for all the champagne we could consume, if it should be proved that the Germans were firing at Paris with a long-range cannon. Nay, they were ready to pledge their entire property and their salaries for the next ten years, so sure they were that at the present stage of the science of ballistics it was unthinkable to construct an engine of war

capable of shelling Paris from the distance of some hundred kilometers, the closest point of the German front being at that distance from Paris. . . . It is sad to reflect upon the fact that among the representatives of the arm which did such marvels in the war there were so many narrow-minded individuals, without imagination and incapable of vision. Anyone who witnessed this controversy can well understand why the French army entered the war so poorly equipped with heavy artillery. Our staff officers in all the services are subject to similar prejudices. It is imperative that they be free of them in the future, if our country is to keep the place which it deserves. . . ."[1]

THE GEOMETRICAL STATE AND THE INDIVIDUAL

We shall have another occasion to refer to manifestations of the French national character in the vital matters of the national defense of France. Now we will turn our attention to the general spirit of the government of France.

How is rationalistic France governed? France is governed in a manner revealing, further, the virtues and defects of the rationalistic attitude toward the problems of life. The organization of the French national government, viewed in its entirety, is a pyramid of interlocking rights and responsibilities, in which the place of a subordinate magistrate is as clearly delineated and neatly fitted into the general scheme as is that of a cabinet minister. The base of the pyramid is as large as France herself, and its apex of parliament and the cabinet ministers is capped by the nominal head of the government in the person of the President of the Republic.

True, the geometrical structure of the highly centralized

[1] *Op. cit.*, t. II, pp. 128 f.

French national administration is due not only to the French rationalistic predilection for mathematical schemes and arrangements of life, but also to geographical and historical factors, which demanded that the French evolve a scheme of government permitting a rapid mobilization of the nation's forces, physical and moral, under the undivided leadership of a central government. It is correct to say that the fate of France has been to live dangerously. From the beginning of her history as a great power, France found herself in a vulnerable position. After almost two centuries of pressure in the dreadful nutcracker of the Austrian and Spanish Hapsburgs, historical circumstances placed France into the unsafe situation between the German ambition for a place in the sun and the English conception of the balance of power.

In spite of their dangerous situation the French, however, could have well afforded in more recent times a larger measure of regional autonomy. The purely rationalistic tendency toward mathematical symmetry in government has prevented the French from effecting a reasonable measure of decentralization. It is also well to remember that not a king but a revolutionary assembly divided France into *départments,* which are geometrical rather than natural geographical units, each functioning as an adjunct to Paris. The non-mathematical English have created a complex, confusing system of local administration, which permits experimentation within a limited region. Rationalistic France, on the contrary, is committed to wholesale centralization, despite the constant grumbling against the Paris bureaucracy (*les bureaux de Paris*). The center of the political and economic power of France, Paris has attracted persons of talent and ambition in all walks of life; and it is still said, correctly, that while vigorous stock of other countries emigrates to distant colonies, the French

emigrate to Paris. All trunk railroads pass through Paris, as well as the much older paved roads, which played a vital role in the military success of the French during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. Paris is France, as London is not and perhaps can never be England; Paris is indeed the heart and soul of France; the street fights of Paris make and unmake epochs in the history of the nation.

Not everything in the mathematical system of government in this most rationalistic of countries is reasonable, however. The logic of several important features of political life in France is as imperfect as that which gave a romance of four gallants the title of *The Three Musketeers.* The Constitution of the Third Republic (1875, 1879, 1884), for instance, defines carefully the prerogatives of the President of the Republic; but tradition has refused him the right to exercise them so that the palace of Élysée is called in political parlance "the prison of Élysée."[1] The real power is in the hands of the Prime Minister, whose authority is only partially and indirectly defined in the Constitution.

The State machine handles the individual with the usual indifference of a State machine, aggravated, however, in France by the rationalistic diffidence on the part of the functionaries who tend the machine. They do not indulge in guessing an individual's character and therefore are prone to suspect him of ill intentions and actual transgressions, until he has satisfied them, beyond all doubts, of his respectability. Montaigne, who was well conversant with law, once remarked that if he were accused of stealing the towers of Notre Dame, he would flee

[1] Poincaré, R., *Au service de la France,* Paris, Plon, 1932, t. V, p. 66. Complaining of being negligently informed by the Commander-in-Chief and the Minister of War as to the war developments, M. Poincaré says: "Confined to my prison of Élysée, I am little informed as to what is going on at the Great General Headquarters."

the kingdom rather than risk a trial. This sixteenth-century hyperbole contains an element still true to reality; while France has to her credit *Code Napoléon,* her jurisprudence is characterized by the Latin flaw of assumption of guilt until proof of innocence and by the complication of delays and technicalities.

The New York *Times* carried some time ago, under the caption "Youth Legally Dead in Tangle in France," an account of a legal case characteristic of the lumbering complexity of the bureaucratic law:

"Recent Paris newspapers report the odd case of a young M. Sonnier, who, they say, is able to visit his own grave in the graveyard of St. Rambert d'Albon, in the Drôme Department.

"In the middle of August a young man signed his name, 'Jules Sonnier,' to a slip for identification and left two suitcases in a local café to be called for on the following day. He did not call for them, and a few days later a badly mutilated body was found near the Paris-Marseilles Railway line and was identified by the proprietor of the café as the owner of the suitcases.

"He then opened the suitcases, found letters, and telegraphed the sad news to Sonnier père, who hastened from his home in Paris and also identified as Jules Sonnier the body found near the railway tracks. The body was buried.

"On the evening of the funeral the café-keeper returned to his work, when he was confronted by Jules Sonnier, who, apologizing for his tardiness, asked for the return of his suitcases.

"According to the newspapers which have printed the

story, young Sonnier must now begin a long and complicated process of law in order to regain the legal identity of which the mistaken identification of the café-keeper and his father had deprived him." [1]

REVOLUTIONISM AND CONSERVATISM

The French have long held the reputation in the world at large of being an ungovernable, revolutionary people. Caesar described the Gauls as a tribe of unstable, whimsical character (*mobilitas et levitas animi*); while Pope Paul IV (1555-1559), though he witnessed the decisive phase of the formation of the French nation during the first half of the sixteenth century, referred, not without irritation, to the French as a nation that cannot keep still (*stare loco nesciunt*). Many foreign observers of the French have formed a similar impression of them. This impression is, however, scarcely correct.

True, the history of France records more revolutions than that of any other leading Western nation; in addition to the Fronde (1648-1663), and the revolutionary decade of 1789-1799, there were also the July Revolution of 1830, the February Revolution of 1848, the Revolution of September 4, 1870, and the Communist regime, March-May, 1871. Nevertheless, a close analysis of French national history shows that the political readjustments of France have been more violent in appearance than in reality.

From the historical experience of his own country the average Frenchman knows that revolutions usually fail to change the very conditions they are fomented to correct; revolutionary governments in France have shown a deplorable tendency to

[1] September 13, 1931.

take over not only the power but the abuses of power of their immediate predecessors. The Frenchman has reason to conclude that the more politics change, the more it is the same old story (*plus ça change, plus ça est la même chose*). As M. André Siegfried has well explained in his *Tableau des partis,* the average Frenchman, being a communicative rationalist, loves to play with ideas; out of a kind of intellectual snobbishness he willingly shows himself radical in conversation or even by vote. The foreign observer who concludes from *café* harangues, or even from the election of a number of Communists to the Chamber of Deputies, that France is ripe for a communistic dictatorship, is deceived. An entry from the notebook of M. Ludovic Halévy, depicting the state of mind of a *café* "Red" of the sixties, illustrates a characteristic contradiction:

"June 10 [1867].—Much anxiety for the maintenance of order in Paris tonight. Things are taking a seriously bad shape for the Government. It is important that streets be kept free for traffic at all cost. To be sure, the musket would promptly sweep clean the streets, but to fire at Parisians is always a grave matter.

"Quite an interesting example of reasoning was given me by Derval, director of the 'Gymnase,' who had picked it up in a conversation with the owner of a hosiery shop opposite the theater.

" 'Well,' said Derval to the hosier, 'I have known you for twenty years now and your business has always been good; you must have accumulated a nice little fortune. Why then do you wish for a revolution?'

" 'But I don't wish for a revolution—not at all.'

" 'How not at all? Didn't you vote for Rochefort?'

"'Yes, I did, for the sole reason of teasing the Emperor.'

"'Very well, this may be as good reason as any, but what if Rochefort were to cause rioting in Paris?'

"'Rioting? I am not afraid of this. The Emperor has a firm hand and if Rochefort should go too far the Government will bring him back to reason quick enough.'"[1]

The average Frenchman is inclined, in practice, to see eye to eye with a hero of Pierre Mille, who held that "reforms are a good topic of conversation, but a foolhardy thing to undertake."[2] M. Bernard Grasset, replying in the *Revue universelle*[3] to Herr Sieburg's appraisal of the French national character, *Gott in Frankreich,* has seized upon the true source of French conservatism; singling out Herr F. Sieburg's reference to "the narrow-mindedness of the French bourgeois," he retorts:

> "You repeatedly speak in your book of the reluctance of France to participate in what you describe as the forward march of peoples. This reluctance, pray believe, is nothing but the sum total of the resistance to adventure on the part of individual peasants and middle-class people, whose 'narrow-mindedness' has shocked you. It is the resistance to adventure on the part of the man who possesses and who hopes to transmit property to his descendants. To accumulate and bequeath, for a time to possess and always to defend what one possesses—such is the essential element of French prudence."

Pre-eminently sober in dealing with vital affairs, the average Frenchman understands clearly that private property is the

[1] "Mes carnets," *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 1er février 1934, pp. 561 f.
[2] Cf. "Contrariétés françaises," *Le Temps,* 12 novembre 1930.
[3] 1er novembre 1930.

summation of man's economic evolution and the necessary condition of liberty; no amount of anarchistic, socialistic, and communistic oratory can wean him from this conviction.

Appearing much more revolutionary in political matters than he really is, the average Frenchman is still less revolutionary with regard to *mores*. The various political revolutions through which France has passed have had very little effect upon the average Frenchman's fundamental conception of the values of life. Even in the throes of post-war readjustment the family, that basic social unit which is also an influential nursery of fundamental loyalties, has maintained its solidarity in France as in few nations of the West. In fact, in France the guidance and authority of parents are probably more effective than in many other European lands.[1]

This is perhaps due primarily to the French woman. Recent political hysterias of open and covert revolutions have shown, it seems, that woman in every land is more prudent and cir-

[1] Cf. the appraisal of the traditional ways of the French family life made by a Japanese girl who married a Frenchman and went to live in France:

"Now I have actually made my *début* in real French life at the family estate in the forest of Marly. Family life here does not resemble that of Europeans abroad. I was surprised to find it very similar to our own. I have married a foreigner and taken this great journey, only to find at the end of it that which I thought I was leaving! . . . Pierre leaves me every morning and returns in the evening. On his return he resembles a Japanese husband in that he falls into the best armchair and does not refuse any of my attentions. I can prepare and serve him a drink and bring his slippers; he does not protest. . . . In short, in many ways my marriage resembles a Japanese marriage. I recognise the same circumspection, the same proprieties. French economy is another form of Japanese simplicity. . . . Most surprising of all, next week I am going to have at my house a veritable Japanese *mi-ai* (marriage interview). I have discovered with stupor that French marriages are generally arranged by means of introductions and intermediaries. The young men and girls here find this custom perfectly normal and suitable. You can imagine with what feeling I am acting to-day as honorable intermediary for a friend of my husband!" (*Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15 juin 1936, translated in the *Magazine Digest*, "Letter of a Japanese Bride," July, 1936, pp. 49 ff.)

cumspect in vital political problems than man. Woman, the natural guardian of the safety and integrity of the family, has understood that radical movements sooner or later endanger her vital interests, that the family can be maintained only upon the traditional bases of affection and authority, evolved by the sound instinct and accumulated wisdom of mankind. In this noble conservatism, the French woman shares abundantly. Indeed, her attention is so completely centered upon her home and her children, that, unfortunately, she has not sought even the right to vote. This lack of political ambition, however, has been fostered, in a degree, by masculine prejudice. Hermann Wendel points out in his recent study of Danton that Théroigne de Méricourt, "the Amazon of Freedom," was roundly cheered when she swaggered before the Cordeliers with a pistol and sword, but when "she instituted a patriotic woman's club in the faubourg Saint-Antoine, Santerre, addressing the 'Friends of the Constitution,' was one mind with Danton: 'The men of the faubourg prefer to find their homes in order when they come back from their work rather than see their wives returning from meetings which do not always teach them sweetness of manner.'"[1]

Well-balanced rationalism does not exclude loyalty to values that are scientifically non-demonstrable, as it does not exclude faith in a super-natural reality. The intelligent and clear-sighted rationalist understands, for example, that attempts to treat subtle moral and metaphysical matters with the methods of the natural sciences, have led investigators to such obviously absurd pseudo-scientific conclusions as that there is no difference between loyalty and disloyalty, between honesty and dishonesty, between mercy and cruelty—all sensations and actions arising, according to mechanistic natural science, from one

[1] Wendel, H., *Danton*, New York, Yale University Press, 1935, pp. 46 f.

and the same mechanistic function of a wholly material and unmotivated universe. Thus intelligence rises to dominate itself as it were, through the realization that there are reasons which escape reason;[1] that honestly to recognize the limits of the reliable operation of reason means to increase rather than diminish the significance of reason—by avoiding the spiritual bankruptcy which attends the effort to reduce matters of faith and intuition to a mechanistic formula. This reasonable attitude toward metaphysical speculation has been characteristic of the outstanding French thinkers, skeptics included.

Take Montaigne, for example. He did not believe in the possibility of objective knowledge, but thought that the human mind was doomed to remain prisoner of its own subjectivity and of the resulting illusion and error. The only improvement possible for such an unfortunate condition, Montaigne thought, was to bring some order into our thinking. This would not make our thinking more objective, but at least it would make our thought a more consistent process. Montaigne, further, negated any objective bases for distinguishing between good and evil. Denying the existence of an objective moral conscience, he held that moral laws were a mere product of convention; but he elevated custom and tradition to the dignity of moral guides. Next, seeking for a still more solid anchor amidst the uncertainties of life, Montaigne declared his adhesion to the Catholic faith of his ancestors. His line of reasoning, as given in the *Essais,* has a lucid simplicity: Since I cannot make an objective choice from various metaphysics, I associate myself with that of my ancestors and remain in the condition where God has put me. Otherwise, I should be ceaselessly shifting. Being conservative by the grace of God, I adhere to the beliefs of my religion and I am free from the

[1] Pascal, *Pensées, XIII.*

agitations and doubts of conscience, despite all the divisions and sects produced by the century in which we are living.

Descartes voiced the national prudence in his discussion of the rational foundation of morals:

> "The *first* rule is to obey the laws and customs of my country, adhering firmly to the religion in which it pleased God to instruct me already in my childhood. In all other matters of life I am guided by the opinions most moderate and most distant from extremes, opinions commonly practiced by the most judicious of those among whom I might be living." [1]

Voltaire professed an outlook upon life, which, not unlike Montaigne's, was a curious combination of skepticism, positivism, and traditionalism. Baudelaire complained that everyone in France was a Voltaire. This most representative French mind—moderately sensuous, inexhaustibly agile, resourceful, and sparkling—lent itself to the audacious criticism of all things, human and divine; the essential Voltaire remained, however, a prudent French bourgeois, rationalistic in his skepticism no less than in his passion for the fundamental human rights.

Metaphysics, according to Voltaire, is concerned with two problems—that which all men of common sense already know and that which they never will know. He advised "the little bourgeois from a small town" that the universe does not think about men, the future does not take care of itself. But the conclusion which Voltaire draws from these distressing observations is quite moderate: In view of the uncertainty of human condition and destiny the prudent man strives to give his soul, whether perishable or not, all the virtues, pleasures, and en-

[1] *Discours de la méthode, III.*

lightenment of which he is capable.[1] In the *Lettres anglaises,* Voltaire reasons as follows: A sensible man should not be exercised over the inability of the human mind to know the ultimate, or metaphysical, nature of thought, the properties of the universe, and the other secrets which God has not revealed us. One might with as much justification be exercised over not having four legs and two wings. To look upon the universe as a prison and upon men as criminals doomed to execution is the view of a fanatic. To imagine that the world was created exclusively for enjoyment is the delusion of the sybarite. A prudent man should, on the contrary, believe that men and animals are what they should be in the order of things established by creation. For all his scoffing, Voltaire never forgot, and was tireless in advocating, the importance of *bienséance* and *convenance.*

The philosophy of the chief among modern Voltaireans, Anatole France, reflected the typically French triad of skepticism, positivism, and traditionalism. In an unfinished dialogue, *Métaphysique de l'existence,* he raised the searching question, "Will this world into which we are cast, in a state of tragic ignorance as to what it is and what we are, always remain beyond our ken, seeing that our senses, whose testimony is governed by our reason, bring us into touch with external objects?" Anatole France gave the following answer:

> "Alas, this physical machine which puts us in touch with the material world that encompasses us, is a clumsy machine which bumps blindly against the things it encounters, but never penetrates beneath their surface. All things are proof against its impact. It comes to a halt at

[1] "La Vanité," *Oeuvres,* l'Imprimerie de la Société littéraire, 1785, t. 14, pp. 146 ff.

the surface, and the substance, however finely it may be sublimated, always remains hidden from us. As for our reason, it is a vague, indefinite, uncertain, confused, and changeful thing. It varies, even in the same individual, from year to year, from day to day, from hour to hour. It flares up and dies down with equal suddenness and does but produce perplexity and countless contradictory notions." [1]

"The unknowable envelops and throttles us," complains Anatole France. Everything in man is a mystery. And yet we cannot know anything but man, because trees do not talk, neither does the grass sing. "It was," he concludes in the *Jardin d'Epicure,* "a great joke at our expense when the Delphic Oracle admonished us, 'Know thyself,' because never do we know ourselves and still less do we know others . . ." [2] In *Balthasar* we read: "Only that which is true is divine, and what is divine is hidden from us. In vain we search for truth." [3]

Anatole France did not lose his way, however, on his excursions along the wailing wall of skepticism. He never lost the pity that makes the tears of life sacred to us, and his irony wore a smile that disarms anger. Being a good Frenchman after all, he advanced on firmer ground with the coming on of age, which almost invariably transforms a skeptical Parisian into a solid French bourgeois, as it changes a fickle, fermenting grape juice into a noble wine. Discussing French rationalism and skepticism, Anatole France mused:

"Far from being incompatible with sentiment, ability to reason leads to it.

[1] Translated in *Under the Rose,* London, John Lane, 1926, pp. 11 f.
[2] Calmann-Lévy, 1921, p. 59.
[3] *Oeuvres,* Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1925, t. IV, pp. 142 f.

"After they have meditated for a long time, the most skeptical of thinkers have been gripped by deep commiseration for their fellowmen, in the face of the futility of the eternal flux of the universe, in the face of the fragility of human life and happiness, and the absurd sufferings which men inflict upon one another during that brief dream which is human life. From this compassion there is but one step to fraternal love. Pity becomes active and the man who believed himself for ever detached from all things human rushes headlong into the combat of life, to bring aid and assistance to his suffering brothers." [1]

He taught in the *Crédo d'un Incrédule:* "Reason warns us itself of its own feebleness and informs us of its own limitations." [2] In *Thaïs* he advises his readers: "The sage has no better guide in his actions than customs and usages." [3] In *La Vie Littéraire* he reaches the conclusion that respect for the past is the only sure religion that remains to man and this religion is a link between the new and the old times.

M. Lucien Romier in a recent sketch gives the sly apology of an anti-clerical peasant for a typical compromise with tradition; the peasant and Anatole France would have understood one another perfectly:

"'How are your children?' I asked.

"He looked timid. 'All right. My eldest daughter is getting married. She asked me to invite you.'

"'To the town hall or to the church?'

"'To both if you can.'

"'So you haven't eaten the priest yet?'

[1] *Les propos d'Anatole France recueillis par Paul Gsell,* Paris, Grasset, 1921, pp. 84 f.
[2] *Ibid.,* p. 84.
[3] Novelle édition, Calmann-Lévy, 1923, p. 49.

"'Not before the marriage, and, besides, you know, he's getting pretty old. There are better things to sink one's teeth into.'"[1]

In short, M. Émile Montague, the translator of Emerson, Shakespeare, and Macaulay, and the literary critic for the *Revue des Deux Mondes,* was, it seems, entirely in agreement with historical truth when he wrote of the contradictions of the French national character as follows:

> "A revolutionary people, says one historian, who dates the history of France from 1789 and who forgets that France has been the most monarchical of all monarchical countries. An irreligious people, affirms another historian, disregarding the fact that the Catholic Church was supported by France at a crucial moment and that the triumphant march of the Reformation was arrested by the loyalty of France to the traditional ecclesiastical institutions. The truth is that France is a country of contradictions, at one and the same time given to audacious innovations and obstinately conservative—a country of revolutions and tradition, of utopias and routine. There is no other country where innovations die out as rapidly as some of them do in France; but in no country do memories live longer than in France. . . . We are light-minded, in a sense; but we are so only in relation to things which no amount of seriousness can change. . . . Convention holds the Frenchman to be a creature devoid of all depth and indifferent to the philosophical speculation, which he is pictured as having abandoned to the inhabitants of the German mists. But in reality there is no people more

[1] Romier, L., "Conversation avec un paysan," translated in *The Living Age,* September, 1933, pp. 27 f.

eager for ideas than the French are; nor is there a nation more devoted to philosophizing than are the French, who are more than any other nation passionately fond of abstractions, sometimes to the oblivion of facts."[1]

POLITICAL MYSTICISM[2] AND MYSTICAL IMPOVERISHMENT

Among the contradictions of the French national character none seems more significant than that between the manifestations of political mysticism, on the one hand, and the clear indications of a mystical impoverishment of the nation, on the other.[3]

French political mysticism is an especially interesting subject of psychological study, not only because of France's international importance, but also because of her well-justified reputation as a rationalistic country. The country of Descartes, that apostle of tangible, geometrical certainty, and of Voltaire, the tireless "debunker," France, nevertheless, has always had among her sons and daughters persons at one and the same time endowed with the ability for clear thinking and logical

[1] *Essai sur l'époque actuelle. Libres opinions morales et historiques,* Poulet-Matassis, 1858, pp. 2 f.

[2] Adapted from our *Shackled Diplomacy,* New York, 1934, Barnes & Noble, Ch. III.

[3] *See* Barrès, M., *L'âme française,* Paris, Émile-Paul Frères, 1915; *Autour des églises de village,* Paris, A. Messein, 1913; *La grande pitié des églises de France,* Paris, Émile-Paul Frères, 1914; *The Faith of France,* Houghton Mifflin, 1918; *Les traits éternels de la France,* Paris, Émile-Paul Frères, 1916. Gorce, M.-M., *La France au-dessus des races: Origines et formation de la nation française,* Paris, Payot, 1934. Péguy, Ch., "Lettres et entretiens," *Cahiers de la quinzaine,* 1897; *Les mystères de Jeanne d'Arc,* Paris, Émile-Paul Frères, 1911-13; *Notre Patrie,* Paris, Nouvelle Revue Française, 1915. Sorel, G., *Réflexions sur la violence,* Paris, M. Rivière, 1925. Togel, K., *Das wirkliche Frankreich,* Hamburg, Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1934. Valéry, P., "Notes sur la grandeur et la décadence de l'Europe," in *Regards sur le monde actuel,* Stock, 1931.

calculation, and yet capable of a profound mystic faith in the high mission of their motherland as the leader of civilization.

There is a peculiar element in the political mysticism of the French; no other nation invokes as freely and ardently the personifications of abstract ideas. Among the battle cruisers operating in the Mediterranean in 1917, we find *Vérité* and *Justice;* the Englishman, a man of action, in baptizing his war vessels has shown preference for the names like "Resolute," "Renown," "Repulse," "Revenge," "Despatch," "Adventure," "Furious," "Courageous," "Glorious." The municipality of Bordeaux has named one of its streets Rue d'Esprit-des-Lois, after the great work of Montesquieu. French politicians, appealing to this national habit of thought, reduce their platforms to a blast of impressive abstractions. For example, the platform of the moderate conservatives is the slogan, *Fatherland —France—Nation;* that of the moderate socialists, *Revolution —Science—Progress—Democracy;* and that of the royalists, *Monarchy—Hierarchy—Religion—Universality.*[1]

The oration delivered by General Antoine at the funeral of the heroic war aviator, Captain Georges Guynemer, furnishes a characteristic example of the lengths to which anthropomorphic mysticism is carried in France:

> "Banners of the Second Aviation Division and of the First Army:
>
> "You, that piously gather into the mystery of your venerable folds the memories of valor, devotion, and sacrifice, in order to guard these treasures of our national tradition and to bear them through the course of time! Banners, in whom survive the souls of our departed heroes, one can imagine hearing through the rustling of your silk the

[1] Cf. Wechsler, E., *Esprit und Geist, cit.,* SS. 538 ff.

voices of our dead calling the living to march into the same perils and toward the same glories.

"Banners, may the soul of Guynemer eternally repose in you! May it, speaking through you to our people, inspire us with heroism and thus create new heroes after Guynemer's own image!"

Michelet, the historian, who remarks in the preface to his principal work that he was the first to treat France as a person, declares later in the same study, "England is an empire, Germany, a land and a race; but France is a person."[1] M. Gabriel Hanotaux, the distinguished French historian and a former Minister for Foreign Affairs, summarizing his monumental edition of *L'Histoire de la Nation française,* presents the pageant of national history, in perfectly good faith, as the unwavering march of *France civilisatrice,* France the benevolent, self-sacrificing missionary of civilization.

In a study entitled *Esquisse d'une Histoire des Français,* M. Julien Benda gives a very interesting discourse on the mystic "will of France" transcendent to the wills of individual Frenchmen—a concept which M. Benda finds implicit in the history of France:

"France in her will to become a strong united nation has made use of the various elements of her population in accordance with her needs and their respective talents. Now she used her kings and their proprietary instincts in order to get for herself both territory and a centralized national government; now she employed the nobility, with its chivalrous and adventurous spirit, in order to start enterprises beyond the mountains and over the seas which would add

[1] *Histoire de France,* Paris, Hachette, 1835, t. II, livre III ("Tableaux de France"), p. 126.

to her aggrandizement. On occasion she called upon her middle class, strong in patriotic virtues, to protect her economic wealth by putting a stop to the civil wars undertaken by idealists, the *League* and the *Fronde*. At other times France used her common people and their passion for self-abnegation (the armies of Joan of Arc, of the Revolution, and of 1914) to save her soil from invasion.

"However, each class of her population has on certain occasions shown itself capable of pursuing egotistically its own class interest at the expense of the whole. Thus, the nobility one day revived in itself the feudal soul and covenanted with the enemies of France. The bourgeois (in 1814), placing their own welfare above the interest of France, instead of driving out the foreign invaders, sold them the supplies of which they were in need. Consequently, the passions of different groups of Frenchmen have constituted a force to be combatted as well as to be utilized. On the whole, however, the will of France has used the wills of Frenchmen in a manner similar to that in which a mammal or a bird uses the wills of its various organs. . . . To repeat, the will of France is, strictly speaking, transcendent to the wills of Frenchmen. . . . The kings, says the historian, have given France her territory. The philosopher of history knows that France has merely used her kings and their possessive passion in order to get territory. And it is indeed pathetic to visualize them, Louis the Fat, Philippe-Auguste, and Saint Louis, rushing from the Rhine to the ocean, from the Somme to the Adouz, bent over the necks of their horses and panting for breath, lance in hand, sweat on brow, thinking that they were seizing lands for their dynasty. In reality they went through all those perilous exertions because the soul of

France was in them and urged them to lay hold on the land. Their assignment once carried out and the French domain rounded off, France was to take over the land and banish the descendants of these very kings." [1]

For each important war the French had a crusader's slogan well-adapted to the times. The medieval chronicler speaks of "God's deeds through the Franks" (*gesta Dei per Francos*). At the turn of the nineteenth century, which marks the high tide of French rationalistic influence, the soldiers of the French Revolution were conquering foreign peoples in the name of *fraternité,* subjugating them to the French Eagle for the purpose of *égalité,* and disposing of the recalcitrant for the sake of *liberté.* On December 15, 1792, the National Convention passed the decree announcing that foreign peoples would be welcome to the privileges of French citizenship and the blessings of liberty, equality, and fraternity. The preamble of the decree expatiated upon the principle that peoples have the right to determine their allegiance; but on the following day a curious footnote was added by a decree to the effect that anyone who proposed or attempted separation from France was subject to capital punishment. Robespierre, in his address of March 8, 1793, before the National Convention, which was in a state of anxiety over the bad turn of military events, emphasized "the divine mission of the French nation to bring liberty to mankind." [2] In the World War, the *poilu* was sustained in his bravery and self-sacrifice by the belief that he was fighting not only for the sacred soil of the motherland, but also for civilization menaced by the Teutonic barbarians.

The philosopher Bergson in his inaugural address * before

[1] *Revue de Paris,* 15 février 1932; 1er mars 1932.
[2] Wendel, H., *Danton, cit.,* pp. 209 f.
* In 1918.

the French Academy, referring to his predecessor in the chair, M. Émile Ollivier, who was Prime Minister of Napoleon III at the time of the unlucky Franco-Prussian War, said:

". . . Into your political retirement you have taken along a great hope. I know what has been your hope. You revealed it yourself to us, when, after the twenty-year-long retirement you broke your silence in order to say to the French youth: 'No, France is not declining; she is merely slumbering and gathering her force. Waiting till she resumes her goddess-like progression, the nations of the world, astonished at not seeing her in the vanguard, are asking one another why the darkness of the night enshrouds the world.' Your hope has not been vain. The night is gone; the darkness has dissipated. When the enemy believed he perceived in our land the closing hours of the dusk, we were passing through the ever-resplendent glory of the dawn. . . . And now listen and hear the murmur of admiration running all over the earth. And look, too, how all noble peoples rise to salute the nation. Bleeding from two great wounds [Alsace and Lorraine], France first served the cause of humanity by unmasking the powers embodying oppression and hatred [Germany and her allies]. Next, standing erect again, she broke, in a sublime effort, the impetus of the demon and saved the world. France has always been the incarnation of right; she has also become a force. Animated by the divine inspiration, she is life and resurrection. Rouse, then, from your eternal rest and behold your hope that has become true." [1]

[1] Servant, Georges, Editor, *Les Quarante, Fauteuil VII*, Paris, 1928, pp. 76-77.

Prince Bülow, in his recently published *Memoirs,* made the following observation upon the personality of the first President of the Third French Republic, M. Adolphe Thiers:

> "The Germans sing their *Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles,* while the French actually put France above all her national interests, her grandeur and glory. Precisely in that regard Adolphe Thiers was a typical Frenchman. After, as before, 1871, he did not cease to believe in the legitimate predominance of France over other nations. He was a spiritual son of Voltaire, very little given to religious sentiments; but his faith in France had something of the religious element in it." [1]

"The Gallic Cock it is that wakes the world," declared Victor Hugo in the *Ode à la Colonne de la Place Vendôme.* April 19, 1852, he wrote from Brussels: *"Credo in Deum, in Galliam, in Populum"* (I believe in God, in Gaul, and in the people); and in *History of a Crime* (1877) he declared:

> "When the human mind would see clearly, it turns to France. In 1870 Germany cast the world into five months of darkness, the world to which France had given four centuries of light. Today, more than ever, the civilized world has need of France. Her peril was the proof of her renown. . . . Paris being threatened, the peoples feared decapitation. Would they allow Germany to proceed? But France was equal to her own salvation."

"The outcome is victory," said M. Clemenceau in the address on June 30, 1919, presenting the Treaty of Versailles to the French Chamber for ratification, "in the most noble

[1] *Revue de Paris,* 15 juin 1936, p. 777.

sense of the word, victory both in reality and in ideal; victory not of individuals, but of France herself . . ."

Clemenceau, "Father of the Victory," was an agnostic,[1] cold and indifferent if not frankly unfriendly to most of his fellow-Frenchmen with whom he came in close contact during his long and turbulent political life. When he spoke of France, however, as a mystic entity, he always found words of unsurpassed fervor, the words of a devotee praising his goddess. What is still more important, these words proved intelligible to the average Frenchman and found echo in his heart. For example, in his address at Amiens in 1907 Clemenceau said:

> "If there is a country which has the right to the love of its children and gets that love with the very first smile of its infants, that country is France, our France of yesterday, of today, and of tomorrow; the France of our proud ancestors of all times; the France of our good soldiers, fearless and kind, whom even the most implacable enemy has never defeated without having at the same time admired; the France of our great artisans of thought, masters of the most lucid instrument of expression that humanity has ever possessed; the France of our artists who have distinguished themselves in all the domains where the superior instinct of the gifted, which perpetually strives after simplicity, clarity, and beauty, can express itself; the France of our workers of all ranks, who are so obstinate in their effort, so prudently devoted to their homes, always eager to increase their knowledge, always anxious to refine

[1] Cf. Lloyd George, D., *War Memoirs,* Boston, Little, Brown & Co., 1933-1937, Vol. V, p. 357: "Clemenceau . . . would never enter a church. His refusal when he paid a visit to Strasbourg after the Armistice to attend a celebration of the liberation of Alsace in that glorious cathedral lost him the presidentship of the Republic when he was the most popular and powerful man in France."

themselves and their products, always keen upon novelties and yet passionately jealous of the glory of the past, always ready to astonish their detractors by spontaneous elevation to the summits of inspiration as well as by the graceful return to cold reason; the France of the great human Renaissance, achieved through the revolution which was undertaken in the name of the rights of man and citizen; the France of dynamic idealism which has magnificently enriched the ancestral treasury of all humanity; finally, the France which is the wonderland of the earth, the garden of our planet, which attracts even the most indifferent and holds him enchanted with the sweet intimacy of her welcome, with the grace and charm of the most lovable environment created to make man happy. We call to witness our forefathers and our sons that it will never be tolerated that this great and noble France, whose destiny was intrusted to us in the terrible hour of her history, should suffer an irreparable offense at the sacrilegious hands of an enemy. We will preserve her; we will protect her; and we will love her, always striving to leave her to our successors greater, more beautiful, and more magnificent. We shall bequeath her to the coming generations, together with the charge incessantly to increase her beauty."

Describing the historic meeting of the Chamber of Deputies in the afternoon of November 11, 1918, General Mordacq, the liaison officer between Clemenceau and the Commander-in-Chief, writes:

"In the afternoon of November 11, about two-thirty, M. Clemenceau asked me to accompany him to the Chamber of Deputies, where he was to announce at about three o'clock the conditions of the armistice. . . . When

> M. Clemenceau, surrounded by the members of his ministry, entered the assembly hall, he was met with a gigantic ovation. All the deputies were at that moment in the grip of an emotion which one cannot describe otherwise than 'holy' and 'sacred.' Almost all eyes were filled with tears at the sight of this old man, who, in the course of the epic struggle, had so well personified France, the old nation which its enemies had pronounced, a few years earlier, senile and feeble, but which had just demonstrated, through a magnificent display of strength, that this nation had lost nothing of its vigor and its fighting qualities." [1]

In his funeral oration upon Clemenceau, M. Bouisson, President of the Chamber of Deputies, said that "the legend of Clemenceau has already passed across the seas, and in the schools of America the small children learn how to spell his name." However that may be, the children of France will long be reading and dreaming of the remarkable wiry little old man, who so powerfully contributed to the national salvation and glory of France at a critical moment of her history. The children of France are learning and will be learning from his words and deeds, and especially from the closing chapter of his life's story, powerful lessons in political mysticism. Clemenceau died in a jealously preserved loneliness, embittered by the ungrateful citizens who defeated him, "Father of the Victory" and *Pater Patriae,* in the presidential election of 1919, yet a loving son of France until death—in fact, beyond death. In accordance with his will, he was buried in the soil of his native Vendée, his coffin placed upright in the grave. "There he stands, clad all in gray, an ever-vigilant though invisible

[1] Général Mordacq, *La vérité sur l'armistice,* Paris, Éditions Jules Tallandier, 1929, p. 116.

sentry of France," as he was designated in the necrology of *Le Temps,* "intensely alert to the slightest danger that may threaten the motherland, and having no rest in his eternal watch other than listening to the sea and the land of Vendée, as they converse mystically about the splendid past, the present, and the future of France. To the defense of the glory of France he is ever ready to call her children with a voice made more powerful and irresistible by legend."

If the old Jacobin spirit of the agnostic Clemenceau helped to sustain the will to victory in a country that was invaded by a powerful enemy and bled by many battles, the military talent of Marshal Foch, a profound believer in God and a good Catholic, led the French and the Allied troops on the Western Front out of the defeat of March-May, 1918, to the victory of July-November, 1918. It is instructive to note how that outstanding French soldier was steeled for his crushing responsibility by a political mysticism, blended with religious faith.

In his address on February 5, 1920, before the French Academy, where he came to take his place among the "Immortals," Marshal Foch said:

> "In the time of Louis XIV the Doge of Venice came to Versailles to negotiate. What most astonished the Venetian amidst the magnificences of that great reign was to be in their midst himself. My astonishment is as great at seeing myself in this illustrious assembly. But I am sure you wanted over and above my person to acclaim the glorious phalanxes that have held their own in the fierce unceasing battle of more than four long years, through the rigors of the seasons, through hardships and sacrifices unknown to the past. You wanted to honor the Soul of the Motherland that soared above this grandeur of duty accepted by

all, this sublimity of persistent tenacity and of unanimous passion for victory at any price."

According to the accounts of those who were near him during his command, the Marshal, while forging and executing his plans for victory, sought strength of spirit and firmness of decision in his daily prayers. Colonel T. Bentley Mott, the liaison officer between General Pershing and Marshal Foch, states that he saw the Marshal go every day to the little church of Bombon to pray. On one occasion, he relates, Clemenceau came unexpectedly to the Marshal's headquarters at Bombon and asked to be shown to the Marshal. An officer on duty told him that Marshal Foch was at church, adding: "I will go at once and tell him you are here." "Do not interrupt him for anything in the world—it agrees with him so well," answered the old unbeliever. Colonel Mott, in this connection, makes the following interesting observation:

"The Marshal certainly felt a profound satisfaction when success crowned one of his plans, but if at any time he spoke of such matters to one of us, we seemed to be listening to some impersonal force expressing itself rather than to a man telling about what he had done." [1]

Of the Commander-in-Chief's devotions M. J. Rouch has written:

"In the opinion of my comrade Fouault, who for a long time had been closely associated with General Foch, it was indisputable that the General drew from the mystic side of his character that self-confidence which is so necessary for those who shape and direct such great events. Neither

[1] Translator's Introduction to *The Memoirs of Marshal Foch,* New York, Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1931, pp. xxiv-xxv.

the politician nor the statesman has such a heavy responsibility—at any rate not such a direct responsibility—as the Commander-in-Chief, who decides that on a given day and at a given hour some hundreds of thousands of men shall offer themselves to death. The General's profound religious faith, the hour that he spent daily in prayer and meditation, generally in a poor half-abandoned village church, undoubtedly helped him to make decisions of that character. A legislator or a diplomat can afford to be skeptical, and to regard their activities as merely relative in character; but one who has the power to command his fellowmen to die *must* believe in the absolute." [1]

General Mordacq records a confession from the Marshal himself that throws light upon his inner life and the political and religious mysticism that influenced him so profoundly:

"When I have a few minutes of liberty in a day, I spend those few precious minutes in that building [the church]. I think I am a bad Christian, because often instead of praying I let myself meditate, and of course my meditations turn around profane subjects—to be exact, around the operations for which I am preparing. But I am sure that the Lord will forgive me. At all events, when I come out of this temple I feel stronger, and above all less hesitant as to my operations. And very often it is in the church that I arrive at the most important decisions regarding the war." [2]

The postwar cult of the Unknown Soldier is a striking crystallization of patriotic mysticism. The national emotion

[1] "Souvenirs sur le Maréchal Foch," *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 15 mai 1932, p. 344.

[2] Général Mordacq, "Pouvait-on signer l'armistice à Berlin?" *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 15 décembre 1929, p. 768.

symbolized by the perpetual fire beneath the Arc de Triomphe finds tender expression in Clemenceau's *France Facing Germany:*

> "I traversed the battlefield of the Marne; and there I found him, this anonymous hero, who asks for none of our empty-sounding, conventional eulogies, being content with the green mound beneath which he has sunk to sleep in the vision of a glorious exertion which even death could not weaken. This soil which has taken him back was his merciful foster mother, tender and rough at once. Perhaps he cherished her no less for her rigors than for her sweet charity in his last hour." [1]

Or to say it in the words of a poet:

"We'll ne'er know aught of him, neither his age nor name,
Nor place he called home, in town or countryside;
Whether from East or West, or North or South he came;
We'll ne'er know aught of him, save this alone, he died.

"We'll ne'er know aught of him, save this that in defense
Of his forefather's soil, he proudly rose and went;
That for a Frenchman's death, France is the recompense,
On whose warm heart forever laid, he rests in peace—content." [2]

An impressive instance of political mysticism is provided by the will of Marshal Lyautey, the conquerer and pacificator of Morocco. The Marshal, who desired to serve his country even in his grave, gave the instruction that his body be taken to Morocco and buried at Rabat. A moving description of the funeral ceremony published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*

[1] P. 311.

[2] "Le soldat Inconnu," from Bollaert, A., *Le Poilu de l'Étoile.*

closes with these words: "Now all was finished. Nay, this is a great beginning. Such is the course of great destinies." [1]

There is historical foundation, then, for the observation of Marshal Foch: "Our rationalism compounds well with mysticism." [2] Its aptness, however, is limited to occasions of grave national crises. It is said that by the time the French had reached Verdun in each disastrous retreat they were perfectly united. During the World War, to be sure, many a French skeptic and nihilistic dilettante of various degree and color of non-conformism vied in patriotic fervor. They were seized by that same great pity for the land of France which once inspired Joan of Arc, the peasant girl from Lorraine. M. André Gide, the relativistic thinker, wrote to a friend while waiting for military summons, "I am giving my whole heart and all my time to the refugees." In *Le retour de l'Enfant Prodigue,* this skeptical author makes the *Enfant Prodigue* exhort the young brother, who is departing for deeds of glory, "Go . . . Be strong; forget us. . . ." [3]

As M. Poincaré records in his diary September 1, 1914: "Anatole France, the nihilist-dilettante, has now become a passionate chauvinist, although no one knows for how long a time; he has applied to us for an authorization to serve as a simple soldier." [4] It may be remembered that Anatole France was seventy years old at the time. During his long life, each time that the bugle sounded, mournfully or triumphantly, this gifted skeptical voluptuary stepped out of his slippers and skeptical indifference to mingle with his less sophisticated

[1] *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 15 novembre, 1935, p. 471.

[2] *La psychologie du commandement avec plusieurs lettres inédites du Maréchal Foch,* Paris, Flammarion, 1924, p. 101.

[3] *See* Pierre-Quinet, L., *André Gide,* New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1934, p. 65.

[4] *Op. cit.,* t. V, p. 227.

fellow-countrymen; he became then a simple and devoted son of France, placing his literary talent on the altar of the *Patrie.* In such a moment he wrote the beautiful mystic-anthropomorphic *Message of the French Village to Its Children:*

> "See, I am old, but I am beautiful. My devout children have embroidered my robe with towers, steeples, crenelated battlements and belfries. I am a good mother; I teach industry and all the arts of peace. I nurse my children in my arms. Then, their task done, they go to sleep, one after another, under the grass which is cropped by the sheep. They pass, but I stay to guard their memory. I am their record. They owe everything to me, for man is man only because he remembers. My robe has been torn and my bosom pierced in war. I have received wounds which were called mortal, but I have lived because I have hoped. Learn of me that blessed hope that saved the fatherland. Turn your thought to me so as to think beyond yourselves. Look at this fountain, this hospital, this market that the fathers have bequeathed to their children. Work for your children as your ancestors have worked for you. Each of my stones brings you a benefit and teaches you a duty. See my cathedral, my guildhall, my Hotel-Dieu, and venerate the past. But think of the future. Your sons will know what jewels you, in your time, have set in my robe of stone." [1]

M. Raymond Poincaré (d. 1934) himself is an impressive example of a Frenchman who, though devoid of all religious or philosophical mysticism, was eminently capable of political

[1] Translated by Albert Shinz in *Current History,* December, 1927, "Anatole France."

mysticism. The following recent appraisal of the personality of that statesman deserves to be cited:

"In the maturity of age and thought, Poincaré was not a spiritualist. He did not believe in the existence of either God or soul, or, naturally, in the future life. He did not feel tempted even to muse about these supernatural realities or give them the benefit of a doubt. He did not reason about such matters as did his cousin, Henri Poincaré, who, according to the testimony of Barrès, used to say, after he had abandoned the strict positivism to which he adhered in his youth: 'If nothing supports our hopes for a life yonder, nothing invalidates them. When nostalgia commands us to hope, it does not in any way diminish the dignity of human reason.' No, Raymond Poincaré would rest his ultimate confidence upon nothing but human reason and science.

"From these two factors he expected, with a kind of integral optimism, an infinite progress of mankind, and not only material and intellectual progress but also moral progress. He refused to be impressed with the old Christian adage, 'Science without conscience is the ruination of the soul.' On the contrary, he was convinced that knowledge naturally leads man to action and that science will be able to furnish for the universal morality an ever new foundation, more solid than the traditional one. 'From the concordant actions of the Universities of France, a general orientation of ideas, a general direction for minds will result, which will produce in the social life of the commonwealth an ever-greater degree of intellectual and moral advancement.' . . .

"But whenever he spoke of France, he always found

terms vibrating with the tenderest of affections. Without falling into banality and affectation of tone and into hackneyed phraseology—that froth of patriotic demonstrations—M. Poincaré would attribute to France soul and voice. . . .

"He said: 'If doubt should obsess me, I would simply ask France to come to my support and to comfort me. Day and night I feel myself in her presence. The more she suffers, the more she appears to me a concrete being, a living person, with so dear, familiar face. I see her standing erect under the blows and wounds of 1870, calm, proud, and determined. I hear her speak to me in a tone that excludes all denial: "Since it was I who placed you in the post which you have accepted, you must give an example, remain at your post, steadfast until the end."'

"This ardent patriotism embraced France as a whole, both in space and in time, the France of all centuries, and of all political regimes. In this regard, Poincaré was decidedly ahead of the times; he did not believe, as a great many of his political friends do, that the worthwhile history of France began with the Revolution.

"He never missed an occasion to dwell on the continuity of French thought and the French motherland. He would say: 'The soul of the nation, while it has developed, has never changed. It has preserved its intimate substance throughout the centuries. The present, far from excluding the past, comprises it. The nation which is the most worthy of having its hopes fulfilled, is the nation that is animated with the highest respect for its memories.'"[1]

[1] Payen, F., "Trois aspects de Raymond Poincaré," *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 1er mars 1936, pp. 71 ff.; for a more detailed study of the personality of M. Raymond Poincaré *see* the same author's *Raymond Poincaré:*

The ability for practicing political mysticism in daily life, when such an ability is combined with a lack of all religious or philosophical mysticism, is a rare capacity. It was fully possessed by M. Raymond Poincaré; but the average Frenchman, absorbed in the routine of the daily struggle for existence, is not moved by transcendent nationalism or political mysticism, unless that mysticism strikes root in philosophical or religious sentiment and in the resulting habit of responding to the motivation of transcendent values.

As a consequence of the skepticism of rationalistic France, a greater degree of mystical impoverishment is to be found in that country—in time of peace, at any rate—than in England or Germany. This impoverishment leads to indifference or hostility toward the eternal moral values, to lack of faith in supernatural reality, and to the negation or weakening of basic loyalties. Emphasis upon material satisfactions results; it feeds social strife from above and below, encouraging the hedonistic egoism of the rich and sharpening the corroding envy of the less fortunate.

Such mystical impoverishment is doubly dangerous today, when "mechanism" can readily become fatal to both rich and poor, unless it is corrected and moderated by mysticism. The machine has erected a wall between employers and employees; it brutally tends to supersede the human value of the worker. It has, on the other hand, created an exaggerated belief in the possibility of an almost unlimited satisfaction of the unbridled material desires of men. In reality, as any thoughtful person can readily see, the material wishes of men, unless reasonably restricted, will inevitably outdistance the material possibilities of satisfaction; this, despite the invention of new and the per-

l'homme, le parlementaire, l'avocat, avec de nombreux documents inédits, Paris, Grasset, 1935.

fection of old mechanical means of production. The machine must be saved itself and prevented from playing havoc with mankind by relieving the continuous disproportion between the supply and distribution of machine-made goods, on the one hand, and the growth of actual or imaginary material needs of mankind, on the other. Organic discord between man and machine can be dispelled only by mysticism, by the otherworldliness which is generated by the perception of spiritual values and by the recognition of the immortal soul as a part of the spiritual infinite.

Unless the search for spiritual satisfaction, which is to be found in religious contemplation and in disinterested service, mitigates and moderates the search and striving for material satisfactions, there can be no escape from the chaos of revolution. The sense of duty functions only in proportion as the individual is motivated by loyalties which transcend his personal satisfactions and which he cherishes above life itself. A civilization, no matter how brilliant and mighty, if not supported by the hard muscles of a rigorous sense of duty and the backbone of sound moral ideals, is a giant with legs of clay; mere form of government, however generously democratic, cannot prevent or cure moral cancers. Of all forms of government, liberal democracy can endure least when it tends to become a mere agglomeration of appetites and egoisms.

Faith in some transcendent reality is the soil in which a steady, fruitful sense of duty and sacrifice strike root. Only through a sense of the mystical transcendent can faithful leaders be brought up to serve the nation. What is still more important, only with the help of mysticism can millions of anonymous heroes of duty be reconciled to the humble, constant sacrifice of individual will and material satisfactions for the good of others, and in particular of society as a whole. Such

sacrifice constitutes true human dignity, however unnoticed by the world, and is the only guarantee of stability for the nation and for society. It is particularly vital for a rationalistic nation that a saving remnant of its people realize, to borrow the excellent words of Amiel, "that a free mind is a great thing surely, but elevation of heart, belief in the good, the capacity for enthusiasm and devotion, the thirst for perfection and sanctity is a still finer thing." [1]

Failure to maintain moral equilibrium between individual interests and social loyalties has resulted in the widespread political and economic unrest of the age. Not in France alone has moral unbalance whetted, if it has not in truth generated, political and economic conflicts. No country has escaped or can escape the consequences of "mechanism" and materialism which have so widely usurped the rightful place of mysticism. On the other hand, in spite of the fact that France is more nearly self-sustaining and enjoys better economic balance than England, for example, her lack of political equilibrium is acute. This is reflected in bitter political fights over the problems of distribution of worldly goods and satisfactions, and also in the loss of a national sense of duty and of political moderation. Such is the price of rationalism when it is not adequately moderated by mysticism. The fear of Germany, which France has recently shown on more than one occasion despite the formidable Maginot line of fortifications, seems to be out of all proportion to the difference in the material strength of each of the two countries. In fact, numerical strength, to say nothing of her material resources in general, is heavily in favor of France if France's near-by African possessions are taken into account. The disproportionate fear of Germany is to be explained by the internal dissensions of France and the moral

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 598-599.

enfeeblement of the country, which arise from the excesses of rationalism and the resulting mystical impoverishment.

The rationalist is disinclined to deal in mystical values; he is easily disconcerted by irrational phenomena and fears to venture into that world of the spirit where his analytical yardstick does not apply. In consequence, the rationalist inevitably suffers from lack of spiritual bearing. As M. André Gide writes of one of his characters:

> ". . . He would like to have some sublime, rare experience—hear a message from the world beyond—send his thought flying into ethereal regions, inaccessible to mortal senses. But no! his thought remains obstinately groveling on the earth." [1]

The rationalist hopes, as did Rabelais, that reason will teach men to be good, to prefer noble pleasures to base enjoyments, to place science at the service of action, and action at the service of the general good. This rationalistic optimism is, however, seldom justified. In the absence of mystical experience and transcendent loyalties and attachments even the exceptional individual may be expected to lapse into *pantagruélisme*—living one's life "in pleasure, peace, joy, good health, always giving oneself the delights of good eating and drinking . . ." [2] undisturbed by the exacting voice of conscience.

This national self-indulgence is responsible for the fact that France has been subjected to so much of that kind of leadership which Taine, speaking of the management of the internal affairs of France, described as the work of egoism served by genius. Rationalistic "clear ideas" degenerate into a chaos of

[1] *Les Faux-Monnayeurs,* Paris, Gallimard, 1925, p. 59.

[2] Cf. Lanson, G., *Histoire de la littérature française,* Paris, Hachette, pp. 255 ff.

clear ideas, unless they are sifted and classified with the help of a clear scale of transcendent values.

Many a citizen of the Third Republic has been sadly disoriented and robbed of wholesome mysticism by the fight against the Church, conducted by powerful leaders, who have confused, whether deliberately or not, clericalism and religion. He has been simultaneously subjected to the influence of naturalistic realism in literature, represented, for instance, by Stendhal, Zola, and their school, and characterized by moral indifference and exaggerated belief in the power of the natural sciences to give mankind a satisfying life.

Even in a very sketchy survey of the literary influences that have contributed to the mystical impoverishment of the French nation, scientism in literature must not be overlooked. This is the literary reflection of the belief that the universe, inclusive of man's mind, is totally material, soulless, mechanistic, and, therefore, explicable in the mechanistic terms of the mathematical-natural sciences. Happily for France, this literary trend, with its concomitant moral indifference, is opposed from time to time by a definite spiritualism. An interesting case in point is that of M. Paul Bourget, who for many years was one of the leading lights of the scientific movement in literature. In his early years he turned away from the romantic, disturbing "songs of the nightingale, the plaintive singer of springtime," and devoted his literary talent to the preaching of mechanistic materialistic scientism. In the last period of his long literary career, M. Paul Bourget arrived, however, at the conclusion that science was impotent to answer, or to explain away, the anxious metaphysical questionings of man, who is a being incurably haunted by the desire to know the ultimate truth and reality. This brilliant writer returned to the fold of mystic faith and in his address before the French

Academy in January, 1914, denounced the presumptious and false "scientism of the age."[1] Not unlike Ariste of Malebranche's *Entretiens sur la Métaphysique,* he had rediscovered the value of mystic faith as an indispensable guide and inspiration:

> "Ariste.—I have covered much ground, Theodor, since I have parted from you. I have discovered a great deal of new territory, while I passed in review all the data of my senses. . . . Though already more or less accustomed to discoveries that await one on this road, never was I more surprised in my life. Great God! what a poverty I found where I had seen only magnificence before you opened my eyes; on the other hand, what wisdom, grandeur and marvels I detected in what the world despises! No, the man who sees with his physical eyes alone can but remain a total stranger in the midst of his own home land."[2]

But conversions like that of M. Paul Bourget, from the excesses of proud rationalism to the humility of mystic faith, though refreshing examples of returning sanity and of incorruptible intellectual probity, can hardly efface the harm which talented literary propagandists of the materialistic outlook upon life inflict upon their more impressionable readers.

French literary genre, animated by the doctrine inherited from Molière that comedy is essential to the correction of human morals, that there is no truth without the element of the comical and no true comedy without the element of truth, has continued to be an aesthetic delight and moral purge to the French and to the world at large. The successors of

[1] Bidou, H., "Paul Bourget," *Revue de Paris,* 15 janvier 1936, pp. 457 ff.
[2] Malebranche, *Oeuvres,* Paris, Charpentier, 1871, t. I, p. 96.

Molière and La Fontaine, those masters unsurpassed in depicting the rich variety of man's earthly experiences with an enchanting admixture of finesse and malice, sensibility and concision, suavity and gravity, gaiety and grandeur, combine, with subtle art, the most sophisticated entertainment with a sound moral castigation.

On the other hand, only too many French writers, with or without Anatole France's soft-spoken grace, employ themselves in ridiculing the sound bourgeois respect for the fundamentals of sound morality. This corrosive flippancy, for the most part idle and self-indulgent, has destroyed the faith and ardor of many a simple man, offering no constructive substitute for the old loyalties and idealism which religious mysticism inspires. Such a "laughter of monkeys perched on the crest of destruction," as Alfred de Musset has pointedly described it, when armed with the weapons of subtle literary talent, readily leads to the weakening of the sense of personal duty in the masses of citizenry, to lack of discipline, to sterile opposition and selfish individualism, and to the dissolution of the social group into mutually hostile egoisms, unless such influences are counteracted by mystic faith and the resulting transcendent loyalties.

Certainly, there are in France men and women who enjoy an equilibrium between reason and faith; who, to paraphrase René Bazin,[1] think freely, talk frankly, mock crude mystifications, and yet are entirely capable of the faith that unites a people and of the transcendent loyalty to the eternal values that raises men to the higher, purer strata of emotion and action. On the other hand, excessive rationalism, intrigued by literary finesse and by the sophisticated blandishments of

[1] Bazin, R., *Les Oberlé*, "Le retour," Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1912.

skepticism, subtly rejects personal responsibility; it manifests itself in France at the present time in national disruption resulting from a thoroughly egotistical and hedonistic individualism, to which the growing influence of Marxism as reflected in recent elections bears witness. The danger of what M. Paul Valéry aptly termed *"désordre en profondeur"* [1] assumes uncomfortable dimensions.

To borrow from the reflections upon the condition of his own country made by M. Jules Sauerwein, the keen foreign editor of the *Paris-Soir,* in a comment upon the civil war in Spain:

> "Behind the fragile deceptive façade of negotiations and treaties a spiritual drama is rending Europe. The great doctrine of liberty and fraternity, which the French revolution inherited from Christianity, no longer has any force, because it has been deprived of all spiritual content. French liberalism has fallen into such a state of pure materialism that Europe, which can no longer run upon that great track, is now moving between two precipices, which drop into equally diabolical phenomena.
>
> "On the one hand, racial and national pride has pushed some nations into fanaticism which has become dangerous for their neighbors, and on the other hand, hatred of tradition and old idols is giving aid to the illusive doctrine of communistic equality." [2]

All that can be said on the subject of the mystical impoverishment of France and its causes and effects, is not, of course, a revelation to any sound, thoughtful, patriotic, democratically

[1] "Discours en l'honneur de Goethe, prononcé le 30 avril 1932," *Oeuvres, cit.,* t. 5, p. 91.

[2] Boston *Herald,* July 27, 1936.

minded Frenchman. In recent years voices of protest have been raised ever more often in the moderate press by civil and military leaders, by professional educators, and by public-spirited commentators on current affairs. The attention of the nation has repeatedly been called to the political and moral confusion of public opinion. Public authorities have been exhorted to fulfil their duty regarding the restoration of the *"mystique du patriotisme et de la défence nationale."* This appeal, *caveant consules,* still remains in large measure unheeded, because of the opposition on the part of selfish and corrupt politicians and demagogues. Definite trends toward moral equilibrium are, however, clearly perceptible, and will produce their effect in time, perhaps stimulated by the fear of those millions of Germans united in patriotic frenzy around their Nazi Führer.

Among these trends toward a greater harmony between negative and positive aspects of rationalism, between science and faith, between "mechanism" and mysticism, there must be mentioned a new and promising emphasis, both in philosophy and literature, upon the metaphysical search for transcendent values.

In the past French scholars and the educated classes have seldom conceived of philosophy as a metaphysical search for the ultimate reality. Philosophy has been traditionally treated "as wisdom distilled from the experience of life and from knowledge of the world, or as a lever of political emancipation, or as the ally of natural science. . . . The great French metaphysicians—Malebranche, Maine de Biran, Hamelin, to name only a few—lived in great seclusion and never came into contact with the intellectual movement of their time." [1] Re-

[1] *The Civilization of France,* "An Introduction by Ernst Robert Curtius," New York, The Macmillan Company, 1932, pp. 99 f.

cently, however, metaphysical anxieties have found, again, able and sincere spokesmen among French philosophers—Maurice Blondel, Jacques Paliard, Le Senne, and others—of whom M. Blondel is the recognized leader. These philosophers stress the existence of a reality superior to the empirical order. They recognize the failure of reason as the sole guide in life; they expose the deficiency of doctrines which, under the pretext of fidelity to objective reality, limit themselves to the material, scientifically knowable aspects of the universe—a mutilated philosophy engrossed with an incomplete reality. Professor André Lalande defines this new tendency as "Blondelian influence doubtless tinged with Bergson's," and, surveying the work of the year 1934-1935, concludes:

> "One of the most striking characteristics of French philosophy this year, is the number and importance of works inspired by spiritualism or even frankly religious interests. True, this spiritualism is no longer the same as that of Maine de Biran, of Cousin or of Ravaisson. It seems to me, however, that it retains the same essential tendencies." [1]

Spiritualistic trends in French literature have also been gathering momentum since the World War. The brutal coming of the war, its savage course, and its cruelly harassing aftermath, characterized by the acute ambiguity of the international situation, which is neither that of war nor peace, has brought home to more than one gifted man of letters in rationalistic France that reason and logic alone are unable either to create lasting human values or to preserve them from the complex, heartless, blind forces which operate in the

[1] Lalande, A., "Philosophy in France," *The Philosophical Review*, January, 1936, p. 4.

life of human individuals and collectivities. An increasing number of people are coming to the realization that these forces can best be controlled by the co-operation between science and idealism. As a result of this new insight into what perhaps is the real source of the world's troubles, a new wave of mystic romanticism, not dissimilar to that which came in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars, is making itself felt in French literature. This revolt against cold and arrogant reason first passed, however, through the *surréalisme* and *dadaisme* of the pre-war days, which preached in essence the apotheosis of unreason.

As is usual in intellectual and moral movements, this new trend in literature announced itself by contrast and opposition to the outstanding standard-bearer of an earlier movement. Thus young neo-romanticists of France set themselves to dethrone Anatole France himself, that "smiling skeptic," who carried the rationalistic skeptical *clarté,* "to a point of nauseating perfection"; whose pages are, in the judgment of the younger generation, "at once, perfectly lucid and perfectly empty." His work was declared to be the polished pearl, not possessing the nutritive qualities of the tiniest millet seed. "We are hungry, and we are thirsty. Anatole France is a diet of hors d'oeuvres!" complained a spokesman of youth, suffering from nostalgia for metaphysical truth. There is a note of anger in this sweeping indictment:

> "Ah, no, indeed, I cannot, I will not call him: Master! There is in such an appellation something grave and lofty to which this low spirit never attained. . . . He is a vase—empty. A trinket that might catch and hold for an instant, but which is incapable of getting any man in his guts. This formal perfection lacks depth and sap. Empty!

Everything is empty, in him and around him. His books trickle through your fingers like sand. His work is built on sand.

"He is a plane surface—one dimension only. Today, this dubitative, negative side of his intelligence looks so cheap to us. It is really a little too simple!

"Memory alone functions in his universe. Reminiscences assembled with taste. No, I certainly do not deny the taste. I do not deny the grace, the agility of mind, the happy mannerisms, the limpidity of language, the harmony and the honey; but I say that all these virtues are void of substance and of marrow, isolated and sterile, and I will have none of them!

"This skeptic, this amiable skeptic leaves me cold. It is for passion that I am passionate. I am mad for optimism, for faith, for ardor. . . ." [1]

This search for a wider, deeper, and fresher universe than the materialistic-mechanistic cosmos of scientism, and the reflection of this search in the mystic, romantic trends of post-war literature were given the following interesting appraisal in a paper by M. Marcel Françon:

"The problems of destiny are now most important. Everywhere in literature, one feels an interest in metaphysical questions. I think it was Anatole France who said: 'In my time, the young people who wanted to become writers, went back to the class of rhetoric; today they go back to the class of philosophy.' I think that most people now have a great disgust for literature when that word means nothing more than a formal exercise or a jug-

[1] Delteil, J., "Anatole France," in *The European Caravan,* New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1931, pp. 26 ff., 163 ff.

gling with words. That an author like Anatole France, who was considered an idol by the generation born around 1870, seems now so antiquated is very characteristic. In reading 'Le Lys Rouge,' for instance, one cannot help having the impression that the book belongs to a past age. . . . When an author declares that life for him is a spectacle which he looks on and is amused by, as a theatre-goer who seeks diversion, the cynicism of that man is hateful to us. In the same way as Musset insults the grinning mask of Voltaire, one would like to treat France with his mellifluous, cowardly, and false smile. The generation of today is tormented by the desire of the absolute, by the idea of infinity; they cannot trifle with their life and those of others; they are looking for an answer to the questions which are vital for them.

"I should like to point out a sentence written by one of our most representative writers: 'I hope, I believe that they will make the share of the soul in literature and in the arts greater than it is.' Duhamel has thus expressed the contrast between the pre-war authors and the new generation which is preoccupied with philosophical, metaphysical and social anxieties. The writers of today aim at arousing interest in the significance of life. They want the readers to think of the eternal problems which confront man, the origin of the notions of good and evil, the idea of God, the value of civilization, the conflict between the soul and the body. While the writers of the older generation described complacently light adventures of love, mere satisfactions of the senses or worldly affairs, the writers of today seem all to be interested in the moral significance of what takes place around them. It is with anguish that one comes in contact with life; no longer do

the younger people want to shut their eyes, in order to be at peace, to enjoy without disturbance, a comfortable and flabby existence. . . .

"The religious questions are foremost in the minds of many. It is amazing to see the number of conversions. I need not recall the conversion to Catholicism of people like Jean Cocteau, Henri Gheon, and many others. Some books like *Sous le soleil de Satan* by Bernanos, or *Job le Prédestiné* by Baumann, many novels of Mauriac show plainly enough the interest in mysticism and religiosity. . . .

"Another sign of discontent is the refuge in dreams and fantastic stories. The literature of today is replete with such works; we might cite the novels of men like Giraudoux, Alain Fournier, as well as the adventure novels of Mac Orlan and Chadourne. Indeed, in some of those novels, like *Le Maître du Navire* by Pierre Chadourne, the adventure story is a pretext for discussing the general questions of Good and Evil, God, the Law, primitive civilization, the modern taboos, the idea of sin." [1]

Friends of France will follow with much hopeful interest the new spiritualistic trends in French philosophy and literature, illustrative of the search for the eternal values on the part of the new generation. In the meantime, while France is on the way to another surge of moral *redressement,* her rationalism generates a peculiarly French quality which compensates, in a degree, for the nation's mystical impoverishment. This quality consists in "a kind of matter-of-fact acceptance of life" which charmed Aline, a character of Sherwood

[1] "Tendencies in the French Literature of To-Day," *The Modern Language Journal,* March 1931, pp. 419 ff.

Anderson's, and which powerfully contributes to the emotional equilibrium of the individual and the nation.[1]

SYSTEMS C AND D

There are two other national traits, which we shall briefly analyze, that must be taken into consideration in the evaluation of the national character. During the World War one of these traits was ironically known to the men in the trenches as *"système D."* The term was derived from *débrouillard,* and was applied to the complex art of improvising solutions for individual problems of equipment and combat, to the resourcefulness and wit displayed by the French soldiers and subalterns in crises for which their superior officers had neglected properly to equip and instruct their men. By analogy, we shall designate as System C another characteristically French trait, which was clearly manifested in the conduct of the World War, namely, that inclination on the part of the French High Command to condition strategy upon a theoretical certainty, which is so difficult to approximate in warfare and which can readily lead to self-defeat.

Man's faith, instead of always remaining the great creative factor, sometimes betrays him into the impasse of stubborn, sterile dogmaticism. Similar frustration befalls human reason much more readily and frequently. Reason can, indeed, and only too often does, decline into fruitless and self-defeating anxiety for unobtainable rational evidence and proof, which can easily paralyze action or at least take out of it its real muscle, so to speak.

The rationalistic Frenchman not infrequently suffers from financial myopia; the dollar of the day so frequently looks to

[1] *Dark Laughter,* Grosset & Dunlap, 1925, p. 167.

him bigger than the fortune of the future. Anything beyond the horizon of his homeland and its most palpable international interests may be an interesting subject of conversation to the average Frenchman, but does not attract the investment of his energies and savings. As a consequence, the French have poorly exploited, on the whole, the riches of their colonies. Indeed, France has let some of her colonies fall from her lap and has failed to lay hold upon others that might well have been hers—colonies which today would be invaluable in maintaining that balance of power in which her safety lies. Even so bright a man as Voltaire referred to Canada as a few rods of snow and believed that the best employment of the nation's energy was to cultivate its own little garden. Small wonder, then, that France "gave away half the North American continent while England, and later America, blindly, vaguely, by no means knowing what they were doing, took it over."[1] The genius of the Frenchman Lesseps conceived the two most important canals of the world, the Suez and the Panama. Both of these fell, however, into possession of competitors of France, because Lesseps was not properly supported by his sedentary, unadventurous nation of rationalists, fond of excessive certainty. This clinging to sure profits, this penchant for small certainties, which is at times more to be condemned than gambling, is a characteristic weakness of the rationalist.

The regrettable effects of such excessive desire for rational evidence and certainty—this system C as we will call it in further discussion—have been manifested during recent decades in two vital spheres of the national political life, diplomacy and national defense; in the latter more obviously than

[1] Burt, S., *The Other Side,* New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928, pp. 248 ff.

in the former, due to the constitutional discreteness of the former and the greater tangibility of the latter.

French diplomacy has been supremely skilled in legalistic, logical negotiations, in which their foreign friends and competitors hardly pardon the French their effective logic. In such negotiations, more often than not, the French succeed "in drowning the fish" (*noyer le poisson*) caught in the nets of French logic. On the other hand, French diplomacy, to speak now of its post-war activities only, has perhaps shown more than once, insufficiency in planning and achieving a large objective; in other words, it seems to have failed in those instances in which the element of risk was large and which demanded an act of intuition and faith on the part of the nation. There are transactions not only in diplomacy, but also in other spheres of human affairs, which can never be fully based upon an exact calculation of chances, but in which one must rely upon the sixth sense—upon the ability to sense probabilities.

We shall, however, resist the temptation of penetrating behind the arcana of diplomacy and will now turn our attention to some unforgettable manifestations of System C in the World War.

The strategy of Joffre in the early weeks of the campaign is a case in point. Unbiased students of the history of the World War are inclined to believe that Marshal Joffre missed some great opportunities at the very beginning of the massive "turning movement" undertaken by the Germans through Belgium in the direction west-south-west with the purpose of enveloping the main body of the French troops somewhere on the Paris-Verdun line. Joffre waited too long for information, perhaps superfluous, as to the strategical intentions of the German Commander-in-Chief.

Joffre was an able and well-trained commander. He certainly knew that lesson of military history so clearly formulated by Clausewitz:

> "All action in war is based on the probability, not on the certainty, of success. One must trust to luck, or whatever it may be called, to supply the place of unattainable certainty. To be sure, in each given case one must seek as much certainty as the circumstances admit of, but one must not always prefer the situation with the smallest degree of uncertainty to any other situation which involves the greatest uncertainty. There are situations in which the greatest daring is the greatest wisdom." [1]

Joffre himself cited, approvingly, Lord Kitchener's motto, "Our strategy must be opportunist, like politics." He also praised General Franchet d'Esperey for "the intelligent daring that is not to be found except in the heart of a real commander," [2] which was shown by the General in accepting the responsibility for the initial movement of the battle of the Marne executed by his battered troops. It appears, however, that at the beginning of hostilities Joffre himself did not exhibit reasonably opportunistic strategy or the "intelligent daring" which he unselfishly praised in a subordinate. Joffre sought a superfluous, because unattainable, degree of certainty before he was ready to take action.

He notes in his diary as follows:

> "Saturday, August 8. [1914]— . . . It appeared, then, that the mass of the enemy forces was concentrated back

[1] Leinveber, Generalmajor a. D., *Mit Clausewitz durch die Rätsel und Fragen, Irrungen und Wirrungen des Weltkrieges,* Behrs Verlag, Berlin und Leipzig, 1926, S. 212.

[2] *Op. cit.,* t. I, p. 388.

of the 'position on the Moselle.' This mass could as conveniently be directed westward as southward, utilizing in the latter case the protection offered by the fortress of Metz. As to the German army on the Meuse, which seemed to us to have attained to its full deployment, it appeared destined to support the movement of the bulk of the German forces, whether that movement should take a western or a southern direction. The attack upon Liége, then, would seem merely an operation intended to serve as a screen erected by the Germans against the Belgian army and primarily aimed at securing possession of this important bridge-head itself. These were, however, but hypotheses; it was still too early to build on them a plan for our maneuver. Desirous to base my decision on well-established facts only, I was forced to withhold my orders relative to the employment of our left wing which was destined to carry out the principal operation." [1]

Liége is besieged and is near capture; the German forces are pouring, massively, through Belgium to stretch out their right wing and then to swing it southward against the fortified region of Paris. Joffre, succumbing to the rationalistic temptation to await full information as to the crucial strategical intentions of the German Commander-in-Chief, is undecided with regard to his own principal maneuver. He notes in the diary simply this:

"Wednesday, August 12.— . . . The German cavalry had pushed up to Diest and Tirlemont; this progress on the part of the enemy seems to have profoundly shocked the Belgian High Command." [2]

[1] *Op. cit.*, t. I, p. 252. [2] *Ibid.*, t. I, p. 261.

Liége fell on August 15. The German right wing had spread out in its "turning movement." Yet Joffre could not make up his mind. Six days after he wrote:

"Tuesday, August 18.—The amplitude which the enemy intended to give to the northward movement of his right wing remained unknown to us. To be sure, there was, in the region of Liége, a disturbing accumulation of troops. Was the enemy going to march astride the Meuse between Givet and Brussels? Or would he employ only a small part of his forces north of the Meuse, as we had supposed, and with the bulk of his forces, concentrated south of the river, seek to attack the left flank of our Fourth Army, which was engaged against the center of the German deployment? . . .

". . . We have arrived at the end of the period of concentration of our forces and it was time to decide upon our maneuver. My chief preoccupation, however, from the very beginning of the war has been to base my principal maneuver on precise data as to the enemy's forces. Furthermore, it was of importance that our maneuver remain masked in order to secure for ourselves the benefit of surprise. Now, our information was still insufficient to determine the amplitude of the enemy's maneuver and his real intentions. On this day of August 18, studying the problem with absolute objectivity, that is, eliminating all element of imagination and basing my judgment strictly upon the data we had at the moment, it was impossible for me to foresee the maneuver that the enemy was preparing."[1]

[1] *Ibid.*, t. I, p. 273.

This indecision on the part of Joffre found a correct appraisal in Mr. Winston Churchill's *The World Crisis:*

"Why should the Germans with their eyes open throw first Belgium and then the British Empire into the scales against them unless for an operation of supreme magnitude? Besides, there were the evidences of their long preparations—camps, railways and railway sidings—which the British Staff under Sir John French and Sir Henry Wilson had so minutely studied. Lastly, reported with much accuracy from day to day, there were the enormous troop movements on the German right, towards and into Belgium on both sides of the Meuse. Before the end of the first week in August General Lanrezac, the Commander of the left French Army (the Fifth), was raising loud cries of warning and alarm about the menace to his left, and indeed his rear, if he carried out the role assigned to him and attacked as ordered in a northeasterly direction. By the end of the second week the presence of the accumulation masses of the German right could no longer be denied by the French High Command, and certain measures, tardy and inadequate, were taken to cope with it. Nevertheless, after the raid of a corps and a cavalry division into Alsace on the 13th of August, General Joffre began his offensive into Lorraine with the two armies on the French right, the centre armies conforming a few days later; and up till the evening of the 18th, General Lanrezac and the left of the Fifth Army were still under orders to advance north-east. Three days later this same army was defending itself in full battle from an attack from the north and north-west. It had been compelled to make a complete left wheel.

"The Germans, as General Michel and Sir Henry Wilson had predicted three years before, made their vast turning movement through Belgium." [1]

Many observers at the beginning of the World War, unduly influenced by the introduction of novel instruments of warfare and by the gigantic scale of operations, declared that the technique and strategy of warfare had completely changed. They thought that Wellington's definition of a master general as one who knew what was happening on the other side of the line held true no longer, that the modern general had no opportunity to display military auscultation. War had become, in their minds, a matter of weighed battalions, of ammunition and massed reserves, in the employment of which organization and technical equipment played a greater part than military genius. The final lesson to be drawn from the course of the World War, however, is to the effect that there is still scope for military genius.

The excessive desire for certainty—that rationalistic System C—brought again and again defeat to the French forces. The single, and saving, surprise that Joffre inflicted on the Germans during his two and a half years as Commander-in-Chief was when he checked his retreating armies on the night of

[1] Scribner's, pp. 149 ff. Cf. also M. Poincaré's following appraisal of the 1914 campaign subsequent to the battle of the Marne: "M. Poincaré dwells with biting irony upon certain contradictions of the Great General Headquarters. He desires to have it explained to him why, on the one hand, we cannot dislodge the Germans, who have just entrenched themselves in an open country, and why, on the other hand, they have succeeded in capturing from us the heights of the Meuse in less than a day. He does not understand how it happened that the Germans who had violated Belgian neutrality for fear of our fortresses on the eastern border, could now take those fortresses from us so easily. He is astonished at the fall of Fort Badonvillers, which was captured in a few hours, so that no one even knows for certain whether it had been subjected to a heavy bombardment." (Bugnet, Ch., "Joffre et M. Millerand," *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 15 avril 1936, p. 798.)

September 5, 1914, and ordered a general attack along the entire front. This was the beginning of the battle of the Marne, which was, indeed, so complete a surprise to von Moltke, who thought that his troops were at the moment finishing the destruction of the routed French armies, that he suffered a grave nervous breakdown and was soon relieved from the High Command.

As a general rule, Joffre would not order an attack unless and until the last shell had been placed in each munition depot, the last hospital wagon had reached an appointed locality, and the last road sign had been painted to direct the supporting troops. Such elaborate, and therefore necessarily dilatory and obvious, preparations never escaped the watchful opponent, who would thus know against what particular section of his front the attack was to be directed, and would prepare his troops for resistance and counterattack accordingly.

This was precisely the cause of the frustration of Joffre's offensive in the summer of 1916 on both banks of the Somme. In that battle the Franco-British allies sought to bring the war to a victorious end. What the German historian, General von Kuhl says about this battle has not been invalidated by the Allied source material:

> "The original plan of the Allies was that the artillery would open fire on June 24 and the bombardment would continue for five days, and only then the infantry would go over the top. Subsequently the artillery preparation for the attack was extended by two days, because on some days during the preparatory shelling of our lines the work of the artillery was obstructed by bad weather. When the attack actually took place on July 1, after it had been announced long in advance by so violent a warning, all pos-

sibility of surprise was out of the question. . . . In fact, the enemy's preparations had long before been detected by the German reconnoitering service. For months German aviators observed the enemy's construction of assembling camps; in June they obtained the evidence of the enemy's mounting of many new batteries, which were connected by a widely spread network of new roads with huge munitions depots. Such observations supported by photographic pictures taken from the air had left no doubt that an attack on an extraordinarily large scale was in preparation against us, on the section of the front some forty kilometers long on both sides of the Somme, between Chaulens and Goumécourt." [1]

When on the morning of July 1 the French and English infantry emerged from the trenches and rushed toward the enemy line, the Germans were fully prepared to meet the attack. As a result, the Allied plan miscarried and the battle of the Somme soon degenerated into the futile, sanguine, and costly *"bataille d'usure,"* warfare by attrition.

Joffre's attempt to break through the German front on the Somme in 1916, after what proved fruitless careful preparation, was the second attempt of the kind. The first was made in September, 1915, in Champagne, when Joffre delayed his attack upon the Germans for several weeks for the sake of "sure fire" preparation. He unnecessarily disregarded the urgent appeals of the Russian Commander-in-Chief—the same commander who had rushed the Samsonov Army, even before the concentration of his forces, into East Prussia at the beginning of the war in reply to the appeal of Joffre for a relief from the crushing German pressure on Paris; the Rus-

[1] Kuhl, H. von, *Der Weltkrieg,* Berlin, Verlag Tradition, 1929, B. I, SS. 487 ff.

sian operation succeeded, at the price of the Samsonov Army, in distracting some German divisions from France and Belgium to the Eastern Front, and thus gave material aid in a critical situation on the Western Front. Now Joffre left practically unheeded his Russian ally's appeal for an action that would call away from the Russian Front a part of the German forces, which were crushing the Russian army, disastrously short of ammunition. When at last Joffre began his attack in Champagne, the Germans were ready for him and his success was a very limited one.

Even more impressive, if possible, was the sinister play of System C in the abortive attack on the Aisne, undertaken by Joffre's successor, General Nivelle, in April of 1917.[1]

General Nivelle had distinguished himself in the defense of Verdun, in particular by recapturing from the Germans the forts, Vaux and Douaumont. France, badly shaken by the war and the continued failure of her arms, hailed in Nivelle the incarnation of the old invincible warrior spirit of the nation—a youthful commander who had at last arisen to lead the armies of France to a smashing victory. In December, 1916, Joffre was dismissed from the High Command and Nivelle appointed in his place. Soon the entire nation, from Paris to the smallest hamlet, heard that Nivelle was preparing another Vaux and Douaumont, but this time on the scale which would sweep the last "Boche" from the soil of France. It became known that Nivelle had promised success within forty-eight hours from the beginning of his offensive. In the evening of April 16, 1917, General Nivelle issued his well-known battle order: "The hour has struck! Confidence! Courage! Long live France!" The battle, however, proved

[1] *See* Churchill, W., *The World Crisis, cit.;* Lloyd George, D., *op. cit.,* Vol. II.

to be, as M. Painlevé, then Minister for War, well put it, simply another Somme. And, again, the cause was the same. "All surprise element was totally lacking in the operation," correctly observes the German historian, General von Kuhl. As a result, the French attacking troops ran into German divisions which for weeks during the Nivelle preparation had been rested and especially trained to repell his attack, the exact direction of which had been known to the Germans since the middle of February.

There was, however, a difference between the Somme proper and the "second Somme"; the latter, characterized by futile slaughter of the French troops on a scale even greater than that of July, 1916, led to an outburst of revolt in the French army which made the French forces unfit for any major operation for another year. The War Minister, in order to placate public opinion, found it necessary to make a declaration to the effect that the blunder of April 16 would never be repeated; that generals would not be permitted to demand the impossible from their men; that an end would be put to poorly prepared and overambitious plans of generals who wished to imitate Napoleon and sought to subdue an entire nation in arms by a single onslaught. An indirect result of the Nivelle failure and the imprudent encouragement given to the German Supreme Command by the reaction in France was the great offensive against Russia, which resulted in the profound bending of the Russian Front and thus contributed, indirectly, to the overthrow of the Kerensky provisional democratic government by the Bolshevists in the fall of the year.

One more important trait of the abortive Nivelle offensive seems to be eminently relevant. The Germans, preparing for the Nivelle offensive, announced to them by a multiplicity of unmistakable signs long before its actual beginning, decided

to employ a new tactics, that of "elastic yielding," (*Ausweichtaktik*) or "defense in depth." This tactics consisted in transforming the first line of defense on the section of the front to be attacked by the enemy into a false front, thinly occupied by sparse sharpshooters and machine gunners. The real line was moved back, the reserves were massed for counterattack, and the artillery was well to the rear. Thus the enemy's artillery was foredoomed to degenerate into a massed firing of big guns at sparrows. When the attacking troops reached the real lines of the enemy, they are themselves beyond the protective range of their artillery. Next, they collide with the enemy's real front, flaming, impenetrable, alive with counterattack. Of such an eventuality the more capable French generals had explicitly warned the Commander-in-Chief, but as M. Pierrefeu records, "General Nivelle replied that he could not make decisions on the basis of mere hypotheses." [1]

[1] Pierrefeu, J., *op. cit.*, t. II, pp. 270 ff.; Kuhl, H. von, *op. cit.*, B. I, SS. 486 ff.; B. II, SS. 384 ff.

Cf. Colonel Koeltz, "L'Histoire militaire," *Revue de Paris*, 15 avril 1937, pp. 929 f.:

"General Krafft von Dellmensingen, charged by Ludendorff at the beginning of September, 1917, with the duty of reconnoitering for an operation on the Italian Front—the Isonzo River—which was to take place early in November and which went down in history as the battle of Caporetto, called Ludendorff's attention to a great many difficulties that the operation desired by him would present: the narrowness of the front of the initial attack; the lack of natural means of concealment for the assembling of the attacking troops, which, therefore, would have to be done in a difficult and perilous terrain; the solidity of the enemy's position, abundantly provided with artillery, certain batteries having been placed on the dominant mountain ridges; the generally unfavorable topography of a mountainous country with deep valleys and abundant forests through which the German artillery would not be able to follow the German infantry; the precarious conditions for the concentration of German forces in a locality possessing insufficient means of communication and subsistence.

"Despite the discouraging results of General Krafft's reconnoitering, the German Supreme Command, confident of the valor of its troops and of the general staffs of its units, accepted all the risks inherent in an operation 'hinging on the very boundary of the possible.' Side by side with the attack on Liége in August, 1914, the passage of the Danube at Belgrade

Fortunately for the French and the Allied forces on the Western Front, there were found among the French generals men in whom the rationalistic abilities outweighed the defects. The ablest among such generals was Foch, whom the debacle wrought by the Ludendorff attack in March-April, 1918, brought at last to the post of Generalissimo of the Allied forces on the Western Front.

Soon after the battle of March-April, in the direction of Amiens, Ludendorff organized another major battle, this time on each side of Rheims, in the general direction of Paris. He hoped that if this battle developed favorably for the Germans, the growing threat to Paris would force the Allies to push their reserves southward to defend Paris. Then he, Ludendorff, would send the Crown Prince Ruprecht of Bavaria with thirty-one divisions against the British in Flanders, to roll up the British Front to the Channel ports; having defeated the British and thrown them into the sea, he would bear down on the French for the knock-out. The Germans, however, had laid out their plans without reckoning with the new Allied Generalissimo. For Marshal Foch—

> "Trusting the information at hand in spite of all its uncertainty . . . resolved to allow the Rheims battle to develop, and then at its height to strike at the right flank of the advancing Germans with a heavy counter-stroke. For this purpose he massed with all possible secrecy in the forests around Villers-Cotterets an army of more than twenty divisions and 350 small French tanks. He drew

in 1915, the march through the Transylvania Alps in 1916, the passage of the Dvina at Riga in 1917, and the battle of Chemin des Dames in 1918, Caporetto is an additional proof that high German commanders do not hesitate to take great tactical risks for the sake of great strategical objectives, provided that they have enough time to prepare calmly for a risky operation and have the means of beginning it with a surprise attack."

these forces from the reserves which Petain wished to keep to guard Paris. He also on the 12th asked that four British divisions should be moved into the French zone. . . . These were serious requests." [1]

The battle of Rheims broke out early in the morning of the 15th of July. The same day Germans succeeded in crossing the Marne, for the second time in the World War. Further and sharper protests were raised by the French General Headquarters against Foch's plan for a counterattack and his withholding for that purpose the reserves so badly needed to stem the German onrush toward Paris. Foch remained adamant. He ordered the counterattack to begin at 8:00 A.M., July 18. Ludendorff, in a poignantly terse passage of his memoirs, concedes the depressing effect which Foch's cool and intelligent daring produced on the Germans.[2] The Allied counterattack, known as the battle of Château-Thierry, undertaken by Foch in opposition to System C, proved the beginning of the continued Allied advance and the German retreat. The tide was turned.

We will now give our attention to System D—*débrouille-toi,* "Manage in any way you can, but do it." This hazardous device operates in many fields. M. Albert Flament draws an apt illustration from a rehearsal at the Opera:

"One could not escape the impression that the actors were saying to themselves: 'After all, this is merely a rehearsal and does not mean much.' While we had expected to find ourselves face to face with a group of neophytes, disciplined and yet excited because conscious

[1] Churchill, W., *The World Crisis,* New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, "The Turn of the Tide."

[2] *Ludendorff's Own Story,* New York, Harper & Brothers, 1919, pp. 311 f.

> of the imperfections of their performance, we saw in reality a gang of school boys and schoolgirls on a holiday. Everything will take care of itself when the curtain rises! To be sure, everything will run smoothly when the curtain rises; the Frenchman is a born improviser. Yet, everything would run smoother if he talked less—or what is it that he does instead of doing things?—and brought himself to see that everything has its importance in our earthly affairs." [1]

The rationalist, eager to envisage things in their basic lines and to comprehend their fundamental aspects and significance, and also confident of the ability of his mind to improvise the solution of any problem which might confront him, has small tolerance for drill. In fact the only discipline he willingly submits to is the general intellectual training characteristic of French education, that training which consists of the rapid arrangement of a variety of ideas, and the limpid expression, oral or written. Practical drill in anything is something that the Frenchman abhors; if he is one of the world's best craftsmen, it is because craftsmanship admits of and encourages the artistic play of an inventive mind, that is the play of ideas, upon an inert medium. This rationalistic contempt for drill, this inclination to substitute improvisation for organization—System D—has both positive and negative results; the French often accomplish difficult things with ease, but do clumsily and with difficulty many things that should be easy.

For example, the enforcement of simple rules of public order is a difficult matter in France. There is a noticeable laxity in the matter of minor regulations on the part of rationalistic functionaries, who privately think that a minor trans-

[1] "Tableaux de Paris," *Revue de Paris,* 15 février 1935, p. 953.

gression is *pas grand' chose.* In search of less rationalistic and more strict policemen, the French make generous use of Corsican recruits, but even so "Entrance strictly forbidden" (*L'entrée formellement interdite*) may safely be taken as a polite request in France; the exit is very unlikely to be *via* a fine or jail, as might easily be the case in Germany or England. Dr. Harvey Cushing of Harvard, who worked during the World War with both the French and the English, notes in his diary with regard to the latter: ". . . They appear to be much more strict here than in the French zones, and permission to visit the hospitals could not be granted without consulting officialdom." [1]

"The Frenchman has a lot of order in his head," observed Herr Heimburg, "but astonishing lack of order at his railway depots." [2] It may be added that comparisons which one can make while visiting ocean liners English, French, and German, for instance, at their piers in New York City harbor just before sailing, are not favorable to the French, precisely because of their indifference to matters of routine. Mr. Brand Whitlock, United States Minister to Belgium, describing in his diary the unpleasantness of Le Havre where the Belgian Government resided during the World War, complains of the noise made

[1] Cushing, H., *Leaves from a Surgeon's Journal,* 1915-1918, Boston, Little, Brown & Co., 1936, p. 56.

[2] *Op. cit.,* p. 13. Cf. P. Balfour's reminiscences of French Indo-China: "We had no idea how far we were from the frontier, and the road seemed interminable. Suddenly, in the darkness, we passed a signpost, *'Ralentir'* [Slow down]. The driver accelerated. It was French territory. . . . Though built on a similar plan, this boat was as different in atmosphere from the other as two in an identical row of London houses. The first was spick-and-span. One felt the iron hand of the Corsican captain, demanding the respect and submission of his crew, and there was an air of ceremony about its routine. But the second was entirely French and haphazard, like the difference between the Empire [the Napoleonic regime] and the Republic." (*Grand Tour,* New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1935, pp. 285, 291.)

by "at least six steeple clocks which strike the quarters, though at different times, so bells are booming all night." [1]

An example of the tragic operation of System D is clearly drawn in M. René Doumic's account of the assassination of King Alexander of Yugoslavia at Marseille in October, 1934, and the death, from wounds, of the Minister for Foreign Affairs M. Louis Bartou, who accompanied the King:

> "It was an unheard of case of culpable negligence, for which no disciplinary measure can be severe enough. No first aid service had been organized for the occasion of the visit of the King; traffic control was badly bungled. What a spectacle, which the habitual patrons of moving pictures in all lands saw—that of the wounded minister running about, bleeding, in search of a taxi to take him to a hospital, and trying to push his way through the crowd! An elementary kind of order and elementary first aid, the prompt binding of his wound, would have saved his life." [2]

The course of the World War offers many striking manifestations of System D—of the French inability to do easily simple things and of their compensating ability to accomplish, apparently with ease, the most difficult undertakings. Illustrations drawn from its history will occupy us almost wholly for the rest of this chapter.

The peace-time training of troops in England and more particularly in Germany, was based upon the idea that the average soldier can function properly in time of war only by applying the practical lessons he has learnt in peace; that theories and axioms are all very well for officers on staff inspection tours, but the soldier in time of war is either too tired

[1] Whitlock, B., *The Journal*, New York, D. Appleton-Century Co., 1936, p. 470.

[2] *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1er novembre 1934, p. 209.

or too pressed to think with concentration; that he will only do what comes to him naturally and, so to speak, instinctively, as a result of long training and usage. In fact, it was discovered during the World War that the new methods of warfare which evolved in the course of events had to be taught behind the lines, that is, under conditions comparable to those of peace-time training.

The beginning of the World War found the French infantry untrained in the digging of trenches and in trench warfare in general. The lessons of the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905, had been lost on the French General Staff. That proud assembly of the *élite* of French officers, suffering from the inability of doing easily simple things, had made small use of the opportunity of studying the newer methods of warfare which were developed in the Russo-Japanese War. To borrow from M. Recouly:

> "France, being joined to Russia by an alliance at that time, ought to have sent all of her most intelligent and outstanding Staff officers to Manchuria. It was a perfect opportunity, if ever there was one, to give them laboratory experience in the lessons of real warfare. The mission which represented us, however, in command of a mere brigadier-general (who should instead have been a more important military leader), was composed of the most mediocre officers. Its members were poorly equipped for drawing the correct conclusions from their observations, and they were in an even weaker position as regards making the ruling officers of the French army take advantage of the knowledge which they did bring back. The opportunity which the French chiefs passed up, for taking a real lesson on the field of battle, cost them something ten

years later, when they had to learn the same things while under fire themselves." [1]

The French High Command was convinced that their soldiers shared with their commanders the rationalistic repugnance to trench warfare; that the French soldier's natural desire was for quick solutions, for bold, free movement, fighting in the open, and the exhilaration of dashing enterprises on the battlefield. The High Command feared that trench life would lower the dash and vitality of the troops, make them "sticky," and in general unfit them for the offensive, for that war of movement, which alone could bring, in the opinion of the High Command, a decisive victory of arms.

In the happy words of Colonel E. L. Spears, the British liaison officer, "it took the war to reveal the French to themselves, and to prove that French troops could be as stoic and as stubborn in resistance as the most stolid northerners." [2]

Experience has shown that the dreary, sickening inaction of the trench and the great privations involved in holding lines isolated by the enemy's artillery fire, failed to quench the gayheartedness of the "little soldiers of France." [3] But meanwhile, they suffered appalling casualties, due to the havoc which System D had wrought upon the peace-time training of the French Army, in particular, of the infantry. To borrow again from Colonel Spears:

"I had attended French manoeuvres a couple of years before the war, and had been much struck by the dislike of the French infantry for digging trenches, in fact their

[1] Recouly, R., *Joffre,* New York, D. Appleton-Century Company, 1931, pp. 85 f.
[2] *Op. cit.,* p. 38.
[3] Cf. Adam, G., *Behind the Scenes at the Front,* London, Chatto & Windus, 1915, p. 177.

real disdain of this form of protection, and had felt that their mass formations could only have been excused on the ground that a spectacular effect was permissible at the end of manoeuvres, and might indeed be useful in conveying a false impression to foreign Military Attachés. As musketry instructor in my own regiment and fully alive to the stopping power of rifles and machine guns, I had found the display particularly exasperating. I wondered whether they had learnt anything since then, but in the battles that were to come I had the misfortune to see these troops, animated by the highest courage, led to their doom in the same close formations as I had watched at manoeuvres a few years before.

"The sense of tragic futility of it will never quite fade from the minds of those who saw these brave men, dashing across the open to the sound of drums and bugles, clad in the old red caps and trousers which a parsimonious democracy dictated they should wear, although they turned each man into a target. The gallant officers who led them were entirely ignorant of the stopping power of modern firearms, and many of them thought it chic to die in white gloves." [1]

Colonel Spears relates a series of misadventures with French army units to whom the British uniform was "totally unfamiliar." But much more astonishing is the testimony of a French surgeon in charge of a field hospital, who notes in his war diary this remarkable indictment of System D:

"August 6 [1914]—Today I saw for the first time an ambulance otherwise than on paper. And yet I have six

[1] From *Liaison, 1914,* by Brigadier General Spears, 1931, pp. 37 f., reprinted with permission by Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., New York.

years of active service. We have never, however, bothered ourselves with this eventuality that has come now on us—war." [1]

System D was responsible also for the fact that, while in some places at the front the British were mistaken for the Germans, enemy espionage work was not infrequently facilitated by the indifference on the part of some French military authorities to simple measures of precaution. An interesting echo is found in M. Recouly's account of a meeting at Bray-sur-Seine between General Franchet d'Esperay, Commander of the French Fifth Army, and Sir Henry Wilson, Field-Marshal French's Assistant Chief of Staff, just before the battle of the Marne:

"He [General Wilson] introduced his companion, Colonel Macdonogh, head of the intelligence service. As soon as they went up to the grand council room on the floor above, Franchet d'Esperey began to spread out his maps on the table in the middle of the room. Macdonogh, the soul of caution, quickly lifted up the cover of the table to make sure that no one was hidden underneath. He must have been thinking of Bismarck's famous gesture, when, at the Congress of Berlin, peeved at the *Times* correspondent, Blowitz, who had seemed to him to have too much inside information, even about the most secret matters, he began the session by looking under the table, exclaiming, 'I want to see that Blowitz is not under there.'

"Macdonogh did even better. He explored behind all of the furniture, poked into all the closets, and finally

[1] Laval, E., *Souvenirs d'un Médecin-Major 1914-1917*, Payot, Paris, 1932, p. 11.

posted his Highlander at the door with a fixed bayonet, instructing him to allow no one to come near.

"'You might think,' Franchet d'Esperey told me, 'that this wealth of precaution was a bit excessive. Anyhow, it was certainly better than the carelessness the French have often shown in similar circumstances, and more than once to their chagrin.'" [1]

General Dubail, reflecting in his diary on the military shortcomings of the French, impressively summarizes the negative manifestations of System D:

"All our imperfections and gaps are caused by the generals neglecting to take full advantage of the services of their General Staffs; they are inadequately informed and only seldom go out to see things for themselves. As a result, the troops are negligent in protecting themselves; the work on observation turrets is reduced to a minimum; the outposts are barely sufficient, the reconnoitering service is inadequate to get insight into projects of the Germans." [2]

As we have seen, System C was responsible for the repeated failure of the French High Command to sense the strategical intentions of the Germans and to counter with a strategical surprise. System D, on the other hand, was responsible for a similar weakness in military tactics, that is, with regard to the combination of methods of warfare for the attainment of a strategical goal. Again, the French, like the English, were usually caught off guard, and it was only toward the end of the war the Allies subtantially improved their tactics, largely by turning against the Germans their own tactical inventions.

[1] Recouly, R., *Joffre,* New York, D. Appleton-Century Company, 1931, pp. 153 f.

[2] Dubail, A.-Y.-E., *op. cit.,* t. II, p. 41.

Thus General Gouraud successfully employed the tactics of a false front (*Ausweichtaktik*) in the battle east of Rheims on July 15, 1918, while Marshal Foch, in the celebrated flank attack at the battle of Château-Thierry, and in several subsequent operations, used the "infiltration" method, employed by the Germans on a large scale first against the Russians and the Italians in the summer and fall of 1917 and then on the Franco-British Front in the spring of 1918.[1]

Had the Franco-British allies in the West acquainted their troops with the new tactics successfully employed against the Russians and the Italians? No, System D had prevented this common-sense step. M. Pierrefeu records: "Our High Command had learned about it in due time, and studied it, but did not think it was possible that the Germans would employ it against us."[2] There was, however, no imaginable reason why the Germans should not try to apply the new tactics on the Western Front. Indeed, the Germans had carefully drilled their troops on the Western Front in the method of infiltration, and general instructions for the Ludendorff attack were summed up in a pamphlet issued by the German Supreme Command, entitled: "The Preparation of the German Troops for the Great Battle on France in the Spring of 1918."[3]

[1] Gough, Sir H., *The Fifth Army*, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1931; also Edmonds, Sir J. E., *History of the Great War Based on Official Documents: France and Belgium, 1918*, London, Macmillan Co., 1935; Ministère de la Guerre, *Les armées françaises dans la Grande Guerre*, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1931, tome VI.

[2] *Op. cit.*, t. II, pp. 159 f.

[3] "Die Vorbereitung des deutschen Heeres für die Grosse Schlacht in Frankreich im Frühling 1918."—*See* Hart, L., *Foch*, London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1931, p. 156.

Note: The attack by infiltration was to be led by hand-picked, well-trained, and well-rested Storm Troops, armed with light machine guns, light trench mortars, and flame projectors. The actual battle was to be preceded by a short bombardment of the enemy lines. The duty of the Storm Troops was to feel out the weak spots in the enemy defenses and

"A primary factor in the German success had been the revival of surprise—the master-key to open any barred gate in war."[1] The Ludendorff attack did not result in a decisive victory for the Germans only because of insufficient manpower.

In March-April, 1918, it was the British Fifth Army that suffered heavily for the lack of preparation necessary to cope with an attack by infiltration. A month later System D was still again responsible for the success of the attack of May 27 at Chemin des Dames, in which the Germans inflicted a heavy blow on the French Sixth Army, as a result of a surprise that was at one and the same time strategical and tactical; the Germans were barely precluded from breaking through towards Paris between Soissons and Rheims. M. Jean Pierrefeu, the talented narrator of days and deeds of the French Great General Headquarters, relates the tragic incident with his characteristic frankness:

> "Prepared with even greater degree of precaution, the offensive of May 27 had remained secret to us until its very beginning; this despite the fact that the crest of Chemin des Dames presented rare conveniences for land observations. In the monograph issued by the General

press over them, in order to spread confusion and panic by penetrating behind the lines. The Storm Troops were to glide past centers of resistance, such as machine-gun nests, leaving these to be handled by the waves which followed. The general order was: "Push on, keep inside the divisional areas and do not trouble about what happens right or left." If tanks should be sent out by the enemy, they were to be allowed to pass through the Storm Troops, to be dealt with by the artillery in the rear; but the infantry accompanying them was to be engaged in counterattacks. Machine guns were never to retreat. These tactical rules were splendidly carried out by the German troops in the memorable attack of March 21, directed against the junction point of the British and the French, in the region of Amiens, and against the channel ports back of that key position.

[1] Hart, L., *op. cit.*, pp. 264 ff.

Staff of the Sixth Army on July 4, 1918, they had the candor to relate the event exactly as it occurred. In their study, the General Staff of the Sixth Army declare that prior to May 26 they had not received any sufficiently serious evidence presaging an oncoming offensive. The manner in which the imminent attack was at last discovered merits relation. At daybreak on the 26th two German prisoners were taken in the sector of Coutrecon. The men belonged to two different battalions of one and the same Jager regiment; one was a private and the other an aspirant-officer. They were sent to the Headquarters of the Twenty-Second Division. Interrogated there, the private said that an attack was imminent; the aspirant-officer contradicted him. The interrogation was stopped then and there and the men were sent to the Headquarters of an Army Corps. The Chief of the Second Bureau of the Army, accompanied by an interpreter, came in person to interrogate the prisoners. The interrogation began at 1:30 P.M. The aspirant-officer, questioned first, was voluble in declaring that the Germans had no intentions of an offensive on this section of the front. Interrogated next, the private said that the men believed that they would attack that night or the night following; he was not sure of the date. Pressed, he said that cartridges and grenades had already been distributed, but not the field rations. The previous day he had seen soldiers belonging to the Guard regiments near his sector. He knew no more, having been recently moved to the sector.

"The aspirant-officer was recalled. He was told that under the usages of war he was not forced to speak, but that he would be held responsible for the statements which he had volunteered; to give false information was the act

of a spy. On this he became visibly perturbed, and under pressure gave the most complete details of the attack which was to take place the next day.

"It was already 3:00 P.M. There was no doubt as to the imminence of the attack and the alarm was immediately given by the organs of information.

"Thus it was that on the afternoon of the day preceding the attack, the enemy's plans became known to us. The following night, the enemy began artillery bombardment between the forest of Pinon and Rheims.

"That the Germans had taken unimaginable precautions to keep their preparations from us, cannot be doubted. Nevertheless, it is strange, to say the least, that the experience of March 21 should have proved insufficient to teach us how to read the enemy's novel game. . . . This disaster, however, had the same origin as several others; we had not paid a new tactics the attention it deserved. This was a supreme evidence of the difficulty with which the French, a rationalist nation, fond of general ideas and of theories, were adapting themselves to this war of technique. . . ." [1]

M. Pierrefeu vividly describes the excruciating anxiety of the French High Command, as they waited hour after hour for the crushing blow, which they were powerless to avert. The French reserves were far away in Flanders, and, though several divisions had been immediately ordered to the menaced sector, two days must elapse before their arrival.[2] At 2:00 A.M., May 27, the German artillery began demolishing the French lines on a thirty-kilometer front. Three-and-a-half hours later eighteen German divisions advanced upon a few

[1] *Op. cit.*, t. II, pp. 180 ff. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 187.

French and three refitting British divisions. Crown Prince William of Germany, who commanded in the offensive, relates:

> "The small enemy force holding the position . . . were overrun and the Chemin des Dames and the Aisne-Marne Canal reached in one swoop. As early as the afternoon our leading units were over the Aisne. By the evening the centre of the Third Army had already reached the Vesle on both sides of Fismes. A break-through with a depth of twenty kilometers had been attained in one day." [1]

True, their English allies on the Chemin des Dames front had not shown sufficient vigilance either, but the responsibility for the front undoubtedly rested with the Command of the Sixth French Army. The war memoirs of the German Crown Prince contain the following curious illustration of the nefarious working of System D on that part of the front:

> "On this day [May 27, 1918] I could restrain my impatience no longer; I simply had to go forward and see with my own eyes how things were shaping. . . . From the eminence of the Chemin des Dames there was a splendid view over the whole scene of attack. The thunder of the guns rolled onwards ahead of us and aircraft fought in the blue summer sky. . . . It was just as at manoeuvres. The headquarters flag fluttered on the inn; runners and motor-cyclists came and went, and the telephone worked at high pressure. . . . We passed long columns of English prisoners. I spoke to some of the officers. I asked one of the prisoners how it came about that they had heard

[1] *My War Experiences,* London, Hurst and Blackett, *s.d.,* p. 318.

nothing of our preparations for the attack, as some of our artillery had had to be brought up quite close behind the front line. He replied that the thousands of frogs in the Ailette valley had made such a din in the night that nothing could be heard above it. The converse of the famous case of the geese in the Capitol." [1]

It was at that moment, when the tragic mischief worked by System D on the Sixth French Army had badly shaken the nerves of the French nation, that the young untried American troops rendered to the Allied cause their first important service. To tell the story in M. Pierrefeu's picturesque words:

"All at once the roads leading to the front at Coulommiers and Meaux became alive with American troops. An interminable caravan of lorries jammed with young men seated in various curious postures, some with their feet in the air and others perched on the frames, almost all of them bareheaded with collars unbuttoned, singing at the tops of their voices tunes native to the new world amidst the general enthusiasm of a cheering populace along the road sides. Such was the spectacle of an army of beardless youngsters from across the sea, none of whom was much over twenty years of age, exhibiting a contagious vigor and health under their clean uniforms. The effect of this spectacle was prodigious. The Americans furnished a gripping contrast to the men of our own regiments, whose habiliments were frayed by many years of war, and whose emaciated faces and sunken eyes reflected that strange glow of a subdued fire. These men of ours were in reality no more than a bundle of nerves kept together by the indomitable spirit of heroism and self-sacrifice. All

[1] *My War Experiences,* London, Hurst and Blackett, *s.d.*, pp. 320 ff.

had the feeling that what they beheld was to be a magical transfusion of blood. Life arrived in floods to reanimate the bruised body of France, bled white by the innumerable wounds sustained during the four years of war. No one for a moment intimated that these soldiers were perhaps not properly instructed, that they had but courage to sustain them—a reflection that would have been branded ridiculous. If one were inclined to mysticism one perceived the presence of an outpouring and relentless force, which would overcome all obstacles because of its own power. Thus in these days of trial, when the enemy once more had reached the banks of the Marne and believed us discouraged, a new, unimaginable confidence, surpassing the bounds of common sense, filled the hearts of the Frenchmen. Our soldiers, returned from the battle lines grim and haggard, raised their heads and shouted frenzied hurrahs at the sight of their new brothers-in-arms. They said, as they observed them approvingly: 'Those are fine boys just the same.' And they added with characteristic Gallic causticity: 'Go ahead, old man. In a week's time your face will not look so clean-shaven.' "[1]

System D is already an old national tradition, undoubtedly inherent in the national psychology of the French. Omitting mention of more ancient instances, it may be recalled how Napoleon himself, the Gallicized Corsican, paid the devil of System D his due, and a heavy one, on several occasions, of which the Russian campaign affords the most striking as well as the costliest example. Caulaincourt, speaking from his experience as French Ambassador to Russia, had warned Napoleon that ample stores of winter clothes and acclimatized

[1] Pierrefeu, J., *op. cit.*, t. II, pp. 197 f.

horses were essential; that heavy horseshoes should be forged and the horses shod for ice-covered roads; that each soldier should be properly equipped for the bitter winter. Napoleon, succumbing to the deceptive formula of System D, replied: "You do not know the French. They will get all they need; one thing will take place of another."[1] But the miracle demanded was not forthcoming and the whole course of events ran implacably against Napoleon and his men.

During the retreat from Moscow, a curious incident occurred to Napoleon himself that belongs to the accepted disorder, which was deplored by General Dubail—and many others—during the World War. After the battle of Malo-Yaroslavets Napoleon was spending the night (October 24-25, 1812) in a hut by the bridge at the small hamlet of Ghorodnia. He was depressed and restless, and did not sleep. An hour before daybreak he called in some members of his personal suite and declared that he had decided to lead a reconnoitering party and to find out for himself whether the Russians were drawing up for battle, or whether they were again giving him the slip. The dawn was just breaking, the visibility still very poor. Napoleon and his party had ridden less than a mile from headquarters when they found themselves almost face to face with a Cossack detachment, which had just carried away several pieces of French artillery. By some chance sound Napoleon and his party were warned in the nick of time. While the bravery and keen sportsmanship of the Cossacks doubtless played a major part in the episode, System D was their ally.

Happily for France, System D is producive not only of weakness but also of strength. The rationalistic resourcefulness in finding solutions, not only of the unforeseen but also

[1] Caulaincourt, A.-A.-L., de, *With Napoleon in Russia,* New York, William Morrow & Co., 1935, pp. 154 f.

unforeseeable, compensates in some measure for the drawbacks of System D. It may be noted that France carried out the mobilization of her forces in 1914 and their movement to appointed positions without a hitch. A still more impressive manifestation of the positive aspects of System D is to be seen in the rapidity and efficiency with which industrial France, so largely confined to light, artistic industries prior to the World War, was able to organize and develop the heavy industries on which the army and the navy depended for munitions of war. When the probability of a long war was driven home, France went to work at the creation of new and the reorganization of old heavy industries and soon managed to produce war materials of a quantity and quality second only to those of Germany, a country that had specialized long since in heavy industries.

Indeed, during the war System D produced from time to time astoundingly good results. Colonel Spears, commenting upon the difficulties of transport service during the retreat of the Fifth Army to the line of the Lower Sambre early in the war, made an observation well justified by subsequent events:

> "There were also certain practical difficulties which tended to upset the most careful calculation. The French horse transport at this period of the war was an absolute curse. Manned to a great extent by reservists who had not yet become permeated with army discipline, the convoyers were forever blocking the roads and getting hopelessly jammed. One shuddered to think what would happen if, as seemed extremely likely, the transport of one corps got mixed with that of another.
>
> "Luckily no such disaster occurred. This fortunate result was due less to organization than to the amazing way

the French have at times of 'getting there' in spite of what could appear to be hopeless confusion. It is the resource and wit displayed by each individual in solving his own problems that does it. 'Le système D.'—'Débrouille-toi'—'muddle through' they called it, and very effective it was. Applied by the men on many occasions during the war, it often retrieved mistakes of higher authorities. It is, however, not a method to be recommended for exportation; its use should be confined to France and its application to Frenchmen.

"On this occasion the *'Système D,'* combined with good staff work, gave excellent results." [1]

In the battle of Verdun the positive aspects of System D stood France in good stead against the organized fury of arms, which was intended to crush to death, under the walls of this historic fortress, the reserves of the French nation that the German Supreme Command knew would be rushed to the defense of a key-position and of the military honor of France.

The most impressive manifestation of the positive aspects of System D seems, however, to be the vitality which France has shown throughout her history—her genius for survival. The incessant surf of the world's greater and smaller interests and troubles has already blurred in the memory of outsiders the picture of France in the World War. Bled white, France did not go down in despair and anarchy, but stood upright throughout the ordeal, supported to be sure by her friends and official Allies. The world knows the terrible destruction visited upon France but can scarcely grasp its true horror and extent, and, therefore, forgets to marvel at the vitality of France. Upon his first experience with French casualties on

[1] From *Liaison, 1914,* by Brigadier General Spears, 1931, p. 66, reprinted with special permission by Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., New York.

large scale, Dr. Harvey Cushing wrote, in admiration of the stoicism of the French soldier:

> "Saturday, April 24 [1915]. This afternoon, in response to a call to the Ambulance for all of its many cars, Boothby and I went in one of them to La Chapelle, which is the present single distributing station—*gare régulatrice*—for all the wounded forwarded to Paris. . . . The impressive thing about it is that it is all so quiet. People talk in low voices; there is no hurry, no shouting, no gesticulating, no giving of directions—nothing Latin about it whatsoever. And the line of wounded—tired, grimy, muddy, stolid, uncomplaining, bloody. It would make you weep." [1]

Throughout the fifty-two interminable months of trial by fire, iron, and gas the French nation, despite its millions of killed, wounded, maimed, homeless, and bereaved, maintained a truly admirable stoicism. As a fitting epilogue to the story of the losses sustained by France in the war of 1914-1918, Admiral Wemyss, the chief British delegate at the armistice negotiations, wrote in his diary:

> "Sunday, Nov. 10 [1918]. Yesterday morning we motored to Soissons. Truly a dreadful sight—not one single house is habitable. The cathedral is literally torn in two. Going through the streets gave one the impression of visiting Pompeii." [2]

Such Pompeii, on a gigantic scale, the World War left behind in some ten *départments* in the east and northeast of France; it also left one or several deaths in almost every French family.

[1] From *Leaves from a Surgeon's Journal,* by Harvey Cushing, an Atlantic Monthly Press Publication, Boston, 1936, p. 43. Reprinted by permission of Little, Brown & Co.

[2] *The Life and Letters of Lord Webster Wemyss,* London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1935, p. 392.

In the World War, as before in the course of her long history, France showed vitality and resourcefulness in maintaining herself which seem to justify the motto inscribed upon the coat-of-arms of the city of Paris, "Floats, but does not sink" (*Fluctuat nec mergitur*). France has survived several great national crises. After each such crisis, she would swing back into her stride, "mingling work and pleasure with the traditional economy of her race," [1] and making fun of her troubles. Indeed, France has shown the power of negotiating her historic course, no matter how dark the tide, how stormy the sea. The positive qualities of her national character evidently compensate for its defects. To recall the celebrated saying of the French historian, Albert Sorel, two assertions in international politics have always proved temerarious and have been refuted by history; the one is that England is a sick man, and the other, that France is lost.

Above all it is necessary to remember that no notion of France can be held valid unless it envisages France as a nation of patriots.[2] Through the national trials and triumphs, aberrations and accomplishments—whether political, social, military, or cultural—the invincible attachment to the land and spirit of France on the part of the French of all social, economic, cultural, and religious conditions and points of view is a constant that runs through all variables; it is indeed a crucible which brings all differences to unity.

Few are the countries which would be justified at the present time in making a statement about the philosophy of life of their youth, freely expressed, similar to the conclusion resulting from the study of a questionnaire recently addressed to

[1] Bertaut, J., *Paris 1870-1935,* New York, D. Appleton-Century Co., 1936, esp. pp. 16, 295.

[2] Cf. Hayes, C. J. H., *France, a Nation of Patriots,* New York, Columbia University Press, 1930.

representative members of the French postwar youth of both sexes between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five years—students, factory workers, industrial and commercial apprentices, and beginners in liberal professions. The first problem with which the survey concerned itself was the "conception of France" professed by the young: What assets and liabilities did the past of France seem to have passed on to the young generation? What did the young wish the France of the future to be? What was the substance of France, in the opinion of the young, and what element in the French heritage appeared to them the most precious? What destiny did the young wish to assign to France in the world at large? What position did they wish France to maintain in her relations with her colonies and with the nations of Europe, both friendly and hostile?

Summarizing the replies received, the director of the survey writes in a chapter entitled, "Frenchmen All":

> "The Communist party itself has declared allegiance to the 'French tradition' and has called forth to the support of its new political orientation the spirits not only of the heroic French patriots of the eighteenth century, but also those of the fifteenth century; it has annexed Marceau and claimed the inheritance of Joan of Arc. No wonder, then, that it is difficult to find a young Frenchman, to whatever social class he may belong, who would not show an ardent devotion to his country and who would not be anxious to qualify first of all as French his general attitude toward life and even his political and religious opinions and beliefs." [1]

What an enviable record!

[1] De Lignac, X., "Enquête sur la Jeunesse," *Revue de Paris,* 1er septembre 1937, pp. 42 ff.

BOOK THREE

THE GERMAN MIND

Chapter VI

THE BASIC DISCORD OF THE GERMAN MIND

THE GERMAN, A DIONYSIAN NATION

"THE Germans are a peculiar species that I cannot comprehend," Talleyrand complained in a letter to Caulaincourt.[1] Those were the Germans of the period of romanticism, the French Revolution, and the Napoleonic Wars. Nietzsche declared, after having seen his nation of thinkers and poets build with blood and iron the formidable Bismarckian empire:

> "As a people made up of the most extraordinary mixing and mingling of races, perhaps even with a preponderance of the pre-Aryan element, as the 'people of the centre' in every sense of the term, the Germans are more intangible, more ample, more contradictory, more unknown, more incalculable, more surprising, and even more terrifying than other peoples are to themselves:—they escape *definition,* and are thereby alone the despair of the French. It is characteristic of the Germans that the question, 'What is German?' never dies out among them." [2]

Conducting what he termed "a little vivisection of the German soul," Nietzsche criticized Goethe for making Faust complain to Wagner of the discordant impulses which struggle

[1] "Talleyrand et Caulaincourt," *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 15 octobre 1935, p. 813.

[2] *Beyond Good and Evil,* Paragraph 244.

within himself for undivided reign: "Two souls, alas, dwell in my breast!" Nietzsche thought that this was "a bad guess at the truth . . . far short of the truth about the number of souls." [1] That number, Nietzsche, if he knew it, did not give, but confined himself to musing as follows:

> "The German soul has passages and galleries in it, there are caves, hiding-places, and dungeons therein; its disorder has much of the charm of the mysterious; the German is well acquainted with the by-paths to chaos. And as everything loves its symbol, so the German loves the clouds and all that is obscure, evolving, crepuscular, damp, and shrouded: it seems to him that everything uncertain, undeveloped, self-displacing, and growing is 'deep.' The German himself does not *exist,* he is *becoming,* he is 'developing himself.'" [2]

An anecdote about the Englishman, the German, the Frenchman, and the Russian, who agreed to write in one brief extemporaneous sentence the definition of their respective nations, presents the German character. According to the story, the Englishman wrote, "I am"; the Frenchman, "I love"; the Russian repented, "I sin." When the German's turn came to read out his definition of himself, he asked to be excused so that he might take a walk and "think it over."

In attempting to work out our definition of the German, which after much abridgment still fills three long chapters, we have followed as best we could the example of the German of this story to the extent of taking an excursion through German history in search of the key to the puzzle. On this excursion, inevitably hurried, we have gathered a reading of the enigma. Believing in the existence of two German souls,

[1] *Beyond Good and Evil,* Paragraph 244. [2] *Ibid.*

which Goethe discerned as lodged side by side in the German breast, we are convinced that one of these is "totalitarianism," and that the other is "infinitism." The former consists in the desire for worldly oneness or wholeness; this desire expresses itself in the individual's identifying himself with or plunging into an earthly interest or task or goal. "Infinitism," on the other hand, consists in the otherworldly longing for the infinite, the yearning to embrace the truth and being of the divine. The inner life of the typical German and of the German nation as a whole seems to move alternatively around these two basic axes; this movement possesses a greater depth and impetus than is the case with any other nation. The alternation in question, or, to borrow from the Hegelian terminology, the "dialectics," between the totalitarian attachment to finite things, on the one hand, and the yearning for the infinite on the other, is uneven in duration and unforeseeable, except for the inevitable alternate reappearance of each—as shown by history.

There is a symbol for this fundamental reality of the German national psychology, perhaps a more tangible symbol than the one suggested by Nietzsche. The symbol is found in the anthropomorphic religion of the ancient Greeks, anthropomorphic gods being a personified catalog of magnified human capacities and foibles, achievements and failings, as well as of human reactions to cosmic forces.

The Greek pagan theology, in its later and more refined phase of development, offered for the worship of the believers two principal and distinctly different gods, Apollo and Dionysus, evidently to suit two prevalent bents of the human mind. As an anthropomorphic god, Apollo symbolized the creative and motivating power of human reason and rational knowledge; Dionysus, the power of the emotion and the

knowledge gained by irrational means such as the more or less inarticulate "feeling" and intuition. Apollo, the god of light, pierced with the eye of his mind through all darkness; he was the god who knew, who was the universe mirrored in the clear mind. Dionysus, on the contrary, was the god who felt, who penetrated with his overpowering emotion the deepest mysteries of life and who was the universe that can be grasped by the deep heart.

The two opposite tendencies or polarities are, like the polarities of the masculine and the feminine, found in every individual and in every nation. Yet normally one of the polarities is predominant and lends definite character of masculinity or femininity, Apollonianism or Dionysianism, to the individual and the nation. Thus the French, we trust, may be recognized by our readers as an Apollonian nation. The Germans, we believe, are a Dionysian or, in the terminology of Spengler, a Faustian nation. Individual Germans and the German nation have their Apollonian hours; but whenever the call of the Dionysian resounds, "Apollo recedes before Dionysus." [1]

The Apollonian, stripped of its mythological wrappings, is the realistic, rationalistic, matter-of-fact attitude of mind, fond of precise calculation and averse to intuitive divination, which is dear to the Dionysian. The Apollonian values a clear, though limited, possession, a lark in the hand, more than an eagle in the sky, such as readily captivates the imagination of the Dionysian. The Apollonian is more desirous of cultivating well a little garden than of conquering vast and vague grandiose expanses that fascinate the Dionysian. The Dionysian is, indeed, all that the Apollonian is not. If the Apollonian intellectually is more in the nature of mathematical, scientific

[1] Worringer, W., *Griechentum und Gothik*, München, R. Piper & Co. Verlag, 1928, S. 32.

analysis, the Dionysian is mysticism, metaphysics, lined up with the longing for the Absolute. In art, the Apollonian is sculpture and architecture, the Dionysian is music. In statesmanship, politics, and finance, the Apollonian is analytical administrative craftsmanship and legalistic leadership; the Dionysian is more in the nature of vision, the leadership of a prophet who appeals to the *Gemüt* and the *Gefühl;* but it is also the intoxicating exultation of the seer and the inebriating ambition of the conqueror.

Greek pagan thought knew two conceptions of the god Dionysus. The more ancient and cruder conception pictured him anthropomorphically as essentially the power presiding over the human capacity for the orgy, for physical and mental passion. Dionysus was, in this line of pagan thought, the god who had been torn to pieces by the Titans but was mysteriously born again from himself as young and beautiful as before. He represented the mystic power, and above all, the ecstasy of generation and procreation. The worshipers of the god who conceived him in this cruder, physically passionate form, especially women, held nightly revels in his honor, danced by torchlight on the mountain-tops to the sound of cymbals. They would tear to pieces the sacrificial animal, drink its blood with wine, and so participate in the being of their god.

Later the cult of Dionysus was philosophized, so to speak, and spiritualized under the influence of the Orphics, who taught that the soul was imprisoned in the body as a punishment for sin, but was capable of salvation by purification. In this newer, Orphic, version corresponding to a higher stage in the development of pagan religious thought, Dionysus became the glorious suffering god who from the torment of laceration and the agony of death mysteriously rose to new life through

a mystic inner power. The later Dionysians sought to participate in the exalted being of their god and to penetrate into the inmost secret of nature, the mystery of generation of all life, and thus to carry their search to the last sealed door of existence—through ascetic speculative effort, through spiritual elevation mingled with a passionate impetus for worldly self-assertion. It is this version of Dionysianism that perhaps symbolizes certain human capacities and weaknesses, certain dispositions and methods of thought and action which seem to be found in the German people more commonly and in a more pronounced degree than in the other nations that are the subject of our present study.

German Dionysianism, with its oscillations between some earthly "total" and the otherworldly infinite, interests us in this study above all with relation to the influences which their Dionysianism exercises upon the strength and weakness of the Germans as a nation, and upon education toward nation leadership. The influences in question seem to come to fruition by several main and clearly banked channels but also by unexpected inlets and unsuspected currents. Among these the Dionysian fraternization with nature and shyness before detached, dissecting analysis seem to merit special attention.

THE DIONYSIAN FRATERNIZATION WITH NATURE

"He understands nature," Madame de Staël said of Goethe, "not merely as a poet, but as a brother; one might say that he stands in family relationship to air, water, flowers, trees, indeed, to all the primitive beauties of creation and speaks their language."[1] This typically German attitude has, as is characteristic of Dionysianism, two dimensions, so to speak, one

[1] *De l'Allemagne,* Paris, Charpentier, p. 191.

totalitarian and another inspired by the longing for the infinite. The German's mystic communion with the German soil, his adoration of the German forests, and his love for the German rivers alternate with the pantheistic devotion to the universal nature as the *civitas Dei,* the godly, creative mother-nature which was celebrated by Johannes Scotus Erigena and Meister Eckehart. His feeling of a mystic consanguinity with the native soil and, in general, with the outdoor nature of the homeland can become, however, under an appropriate stimulation, a mighty source of national patriotic impetus, especially in time of war; then the element of "totalitarianism" in his attitude toward nature overshadows the element of "infinitism" and the German becomes passionately nationalistic. Among significant peaceful manifestations of the feeling for nature in everyday life, there may be mentioned that profound Dionysian enjoyment of nature (*Naturgenuss*) which has made Germany, though one of the most industrialized countries of the world, the least urbanized one; the German love for nature has preserved the nation from the debilitating, nerve-shattering effects of industrialization and urbanization. When his means do not permit him the luxury of hiking, camping, or satisfying his *Wanderlust* by travel, when, in general, the German cannot go to nature, he brings nature to his dwelling, even in the form of modest flower pots and flower boxes arranged on window sills and inside the house, apartment, or room.

The solidity of the German nerves owes also not a little to the *Laubenkolonien* in the suburbs of large cities:

> "These *Laubenkolonien* consist of hundreds of rectangular miniature gardens, each one with a little shack (*'Laube'*) and usually with a few fruit trees. There, the proud owners, mostly people from the lower middle class

and the 'working class,' raise potatoes and vegetables, and above all, flowers. During the summer months, they live in their primitive bungalows and put all their spare time into garden-work. Nobody may claim that he knows the German people who has not walked through a *Laubenkolonie,* who has not seen men, women, and children at work and at leisure in their gardens, who has not observed the religious zeal with which each garden is cultivated. For Germany (where gardening is a popular hobby) the *Laubenkolonien* represent a relatively successful attempt at solving the problem of leisure in an epoch of decreasing working hours. It is from this angle especially that the plans of the New Germany must be evaluated to build factories in the country where every worker can be provided with his garden." [1]

Communion with nature is achieved by the method of feeling and for the sake of feeling, not by an intellectual understanding. Goethe has happily expressed this attitude of mind in the beautiful verse:

"How is the rose possible?
Who can fathom the nightingale?"

The element of "infinitism," that longing for the infinite, which the German feeling for nature contains, has been a rather important contributing factor in the spread of the international influence of the Germans. The German's fraternization with nature makes him an excellent farmer in whatever continent or climate he may settle; America, with its variety of the original national stock among the farmers, furnishes an especially rich field of observation. His feeling for nature

[1] Koischwitz, O., *Germany,* Milwaukee, Gutenberg Publishing Co., 1935, pp. 64 f.

also makes him a good colonizer, and for two reasons. First, he rapidly becomes acclimated in the new country, more rapidly than any other national group of immigrants; he puts his roots into its soil, because of the element of cosmopolitanism in his love for nature:

"There as here, the holy heaven
God will spread o'er me.
And the stars will sing my lullaby,
There as here."

Second, his love for the natural beauty of the country of his new residence creates for the German a welcome, a link connecting him with the community, such as the Englishman can make for himself only in a very limited degree, and the Frenchman practically not at all.

The German's intense feeling for nature is, to be sure, well known. It runs through German literature, with its profession of worshipful awe for the mighty phenomena of nature; the loving diminutives for animals and friendly beauties of nature are also characteristic. The peculiarly German personification of natural phenomena are too well known to be enlarged upon here.[1] It seems justifiable, however, to look further into the German's companionship, or rather communion, with nature as an unusually powerful restorative for the nation's nerve-energy, particularly in time of war.

In the songs of the minnesingers, Walther von der Vogel-

[1] The latter has found a curious reflection in the following passage of Johann Rabener's *Condemned to Live*, a novel characteristic of the postwar disorganization. "Frau Beate Feuerhann's day always began with the severe, minute inspection of her face. . . . It was also her habit to call her wrinkles by Christian names, those women's names she considered ugliest. So that her note-book contained mysterious memoranda: 'Get rid of Kunegonde, finish off Emma, powder down Adelaide, etc.'" New York, Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1935, p. 49.

weide and Neidhart von Reuenthal, forests, hills, flowers, foliage, even grass are mysteriously so many brothers and sisters of the heroes of strife or love. In their joys and sorrows those inanimate phenomena of nature mystically participate; the heroes turn to nature for guidance and revelation concerning imminent changes of fortune.

It is certainly not a mere accident that the German high commanders in the World War, the sons of their Dionysian race, give in their memoirs much more attention to the phenomena of nature, preceding or coincident with an important military operation, than do the French commanders. All the outstanding generals in the World War were, in substance, men of the same kind of training, that of general staff officers before the war. Their memoirs, therefore, exhibit the same mathematical manner of describing their operations; figures of the various units of men and of war munitions, the geography of the front and rear, the distribution of reserves, and ways and means of communication fill their pages. Yet the German commanders in the World War—very much like the minnesingers—would find time to stop and describe some natural phenomena which had no technical military significance but which undoubtedly had an emotional significance to the author of the memoirs. The French generals, on the contrary, proceed in their memoirs very much in the manner of the troubadours and trouvères who did not arrest the flow of the story in order to describe the mysterious voices of nature; the Apollonians proceeded from fact to fact, hastening to relate what happened to the hero next and what were the consequences.

Field-Marshal von Hindenburg, a man of few words, who is very brief and concise in his reminiscences, nevertheless interrupts his account of the final preparations for the great

battle that was to begin at the zero hour of March 21, 1918, when three German armies were to fall upon the two southern armies of Field-Marshal Lord Haig, as follows:

> "The feeling of tension under which we had left Spa on the evening of March 18 increased as we were entering the headquarters at Avesnes. The brilliant sky of early spring, clear until then, began to be covered. Menacing rainbows spanned the locality."

As if he feared a bad omen and tried to drive off a disturbing thought, von Hindenburg records:

> "In themselves, the clouds and rain in these days were not disagreeable to us because they probably veiled our last-minute preparation for the attack." [1]

No like deviations are found in the memoirs of Joffre or Foch.

An outstanding German submarine commander, Captain Ernst Haschagen, while relating the tense experience of an attack upon his submarine by a British destroyer, interrupts his dramatic account to describe how beautiful was the sun in the emerald aquarium of the deep sea where the submarine had saved herself. Referring to the last war voyage of his craft at the close of the World War, a short time before the armistice, the author concludes in the following sentimental Dionysian strain:

> "Having turned back home we could for a long time hear the weeping of breakers rushing on the rocks of the lonely islands. The sea-gulls lanced their plaintive calls and the squall whistled its eternal song over the expanse of the waters." [2]

[1] *Aus meinem Leben,* Leipzig, Verlag von S. Hirzel, 1920, S. 316.

[2] La Bruyère, R., "La guerre sous-marine racontée par les Allemands," *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 1er mai 1934, p. 149.

And perhaps nowhere in the voluminous literature of war memories outside of Germany can anything be discovered similar to the Dionysian passages that are found in the account of a subaltern fighting in the spring of 1918. On the night before the beginning of the battle, while awaiting in the trenches the zero hour, he writes:

> "Out there on all roads and in all dugouts a hushed, mysterious movement is going on. And yet how restfully still are the star-lights! Tomorrow will be a sunny day. The crescent moon is suspended in the west like a glittering scimiter. One can understand the Middle Ages with their passion for reading fiery celestial signs. Now the air around has become filled with absolute quiet. Can one not hear the earth breathe? Is not a partridge calling? Harbingers of spring will be soaring. . . ."

With the evening of one of the closing days of the abortive *Friedenssturm* the author connects the following recollection, which is permeated with a typically Dionysian communion with nature:

> "After a whole week of splendid spring sunshine, the Thursday of Easter week had brought on gray clouds and the interminable showers of rain began to fall upon the ground. Only seldom can one now see the sun throw its pale rays through the overcast sky, as if its strength had been exhausted. So, too, is the force of the German armies exhausted. With the last spasmodic breath they struggle against the sinister fate which draws on behind the menacing clouds." [1]

[1] Goes, G., *Der Tag X: Die grosse Schlacht in Frankreich 21. März—5. April 1918*, Berlin, Verlag Tradition, 1933, SS. 14, 15, 162.

The following two abstracts from war letters of German university students may also be of interest for their richly tender phraseology inspired by the Dionysian companionship with nature:

"I rejoice in the beauties of nature; in this summer-like Renoir autumn of the canal and the Aisne; in the ever-shimmering, ever-rustling avenue of elms. The hedge-bordered meadows take on a bluish tinge from the rising mist on the brink of the water, and a faint, blue-green reflection is mirrored below. This green, flourishing wilderness is woven in summer's threads of autumn-tinted, soft-toned wools. One can hardly look into the dazzling blue sky. In the tangled grass blooms—an exquisite miracle—the autumn crocus. Long, slender, pale-lilac flowers, with their wonderfully varied length of petal, and the pistil, thickly coated with scented yellow pollen, shining through the frail calyx. Their delicate stems are snow-white in the heat. Sometimes one sees here the 'classic' landscape of Poussin, of Böcklin. I realize how art is determined by landscape. I have drunk all that my eyelashes could encircle of the world's golden superabundance."[1]

. . . . . .

"Out of the gardens of the ruined châteaux of Hollebecke and Camp we fetched rhododendrons, box, snowdrops, and primroses and made quite nice little flower beds. We have cleaned out the little brook which flows through the valley, and some clever comrades have built dams and constructed pretty little watermills, so-called

[1] A letter of Helmut Zschuppe, student of philosophy, Leipzig, born December 29, 1899, killed September 18, 1917. *German Students' War Letters*, translated from the original edition of Dr. Philip Witkop, London, Methuen & Co., 1929.

'parole-clocks,' which, by their revolutions, are supposed to count how many minutes more the war was going to last. We have planted whole bushes of willow and hazel with pretty catkins on them and little firs with their roots, so that a melancholy desert is transformed into an idyllic grove. Every dug-out has its board carved with a name suited to the situation: 'Villa Woodland-Peace,' 'Heart on the Rhine,' 'Eagle's Nest,' etc. Luckily there is no lack of birds, especially thrushes, which have now got used to the whistling of bullets and falling of shells, and wake us in the morning with their cheerful twittering." [1]

The Germans in this regard are not unlike the Japanese who combine a cult of flowers, as ardent and tender as that practiced by a woman amateur horticulturist, with the grim determination of the samurai; so that it may be said of both that with the perfume of roses they can sharpen their swords.

THE DIONYSIAN AVERSION TO THE PLAY OF ANALYSIS

The average German's feeling for nature and its mysteries finds a counterpart in his aversion to detached analysis, and still more in his distrusting the play of reason for the play's sake. We have seen a similar attitude of mind in the Englishman, for which the Germanic element in him is perhaps accountable. The Englishman's mind, perhaps because of his ethnic and historical antecedents, seems, however, to be a median between Latin Apollonianism and Teutonic Dionysianism; he counterbalances his anti-intellectualism with emo-

[1] A letter of Lothar Dietz, student of philosophy, Leipzig, born December 12, 1889, killed April 15, 1915, *ibid.*

tional controls, which are much weaker in his German cousin of the purer Teutonic attributes.

The Dionysian is averse to irresponsible sophistic intellectual frolics, and he decidedly dislikes the turn of mind such as M. Léon Daudet sees in Marcel Proust, who was in vogue among the young during the decade 1920-1930: ". . . While Proust, with part of his brain, admires and enjoys the sight of something, he criticizes it with another part of his brain, and with a third stands watching indifferently what the other two are doing."[1] The average German is indifferent, if not hostile, to intellectual showmanship even when it has relation to some practical problems of life, such as political problems and theories and doctrines centered around politics. Why should it be so? The German's "totalitarianism," love of wholeness, oneness, instinctively warns him of the dangers of serious national and social discord implied in his very "totalitarianism"; this makes the German embrace wholeheartedly and lose his bearing on chameleon party orientations and doctrines.

Parteisucht, acrimonious discussions and dissensions among the multiple political parties of the fourteen-year parliamentary period of German political history, 1919-1933, had fatigued and frightened the average German, bewildered by artifices of political finessing, party bargaining, and party intrigues. The nation at large was seized by a longing for the rule of one man, a moral—not an intellectual—superman; a strong-willed leader whose personality would grip the national imagination by the sheer strength of the sincerity, actual or apparent, of his belief in himself as knowing through the communion between his inner self and the mystic voice of the people the true, and of course high, destiny of the nation. The power to "hear

[1] *Memoirs,* New York, The Dial Press, 1925, p. 265.

voices," which would be a serious liability among Apollonians, is a valuable asset in a Dionysian leadership. Adolf Hitler, who has been called the German Joan of Arc, knew how to supply this need, however inarticulate, acutely felt by the German masses. This need could not be satisfied by parliamentary government, and the return of the rule of the Kaiser and the princes had been made impossible by their association with the losing of the war. Adolf Hitler addressed himself to that part of the population of which he said:

> "When five Germans were together, there were five parties. But I knew another, better Germany, invisible then to most other people." [1]

Several observers of Germany, 1919-1933, have quoted the shopkeeper who bitterly complained of the quibbles and squabbles of "those fellows in Berlin" and, looking longingly at the closed palace, recalled how secure and safe he felt when late at night he saw the windows in the prince's private rooms lighted; everybody knew that the prince worked hard and kept watch over the well-being of his subjects! Very numerous were the Germans who felt so about the postwar parliamentary regime, and they were presumably among the first to swell the phalanxes of the Nazi electorate.[2]

At all events, it is a clear historical consequence of their Dionysian "totalitarianism," rather than a mere historical accident, that the Germans, who since the Renaissance have

[1] Associated Press, Munich, February 24, 1935.

[2] Cf. Keyserling, H., *Europe,* New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1928, p. 117:

"A Dresden bookseller once said to me: 'Before, when we still had a King, I could close up my shop and go home and look up at the lights in the castle with a feeling of security; on holiday evenings he was still at work, on things beyond my understanding. Today I feel insecure. I need a close-fitting coat to feel safe in my skin.' Because the same thing applies to the overwhelming majority of Germans, democracy in the English sense is of little use to them."

hardly been second to any nation culturally, have remained a sort of collective intellectual minor, politically, as compared with the English and the French. A nation that voluntarily accepts dictatorship is a nation motivated by the fear of a clash of political analyses and theories, which an Apollonian nation can well assimilate and endure. In this connection the observation made by M. Aristide Briand in a conversation with Marshal Foch may be of interest:

> "You know the instincts of the Germans. They all follow their leader like wild ducks. We do exactly the opposite. Look at the Palais-Bourbon, where my five or six hundred sparrows spend their time twittering and quarrelling." [1]

The Dionysian "totalitarianism" in thinking produces, politically, not only a willing obedience to the head of the State, but also a peculiar degree of credulity. Nietzsche said:

> "As Frenchmen reflect the politeness and the *esprit* of French society, so do Germans reflect something of the deep, pensive earnestness of their mystics and musicians, and also their silly childishness." [2]

Dr. Gustav Stresemann complained that he had to conduct the foreign policy of a people which prays not only for its daily bread, but also for its daily illusion.

General Mordacq, one of the high French officials in the Rhine Zone during the Allied occupation, has related:

> "I continue studying German mentality. It worries me more and more. Each day I discover in them, side by side with their great qualities, like the power for work, the

[1] Recouly, R., *Foch*, New York, D. Appleton-Century Co., 1929, p. 282.
[2] *Peoples and Countries*, Paragraphs 11, 15.

spirit of discipline, ardent patriotism, also very grave defects, which obviously do not date from yesterday, but with which I was not familiar *de visu;* among these defects which make Germans dangerous neighbors, the particularly significant defect is their extreme credulity. . . .

"How many times at Wiesbaden, when the general political and international situation was somewhat tense, Germans, official personages or private citizens, would rush in to see me for information in connection with some absolutely extravagant news launched by their newspapers and information agencies!" [1]

The political significance, domestic and international, of the Dionysian aversion to intellectual analysis can perhaps be better appraised when one realizes what deep and wide roots it must have in the German mind to express itself in such varied and apparently disparate forms as, for example, an insufficient sense of humor, the fear of split personality, and the romantic *Sehnsucht.*

The influence exercised on the Germans in intellectual matters by their Dionysian "totalitarianism" is adverse to the development of a sense of humor for the simple reason that a sense of humor is in substance a form of analysis. The Dionysian, in his totalitarian emotionalism, is much more apt to burst into Homeric laughter or fall into Homeric sobbing than to indulge in light jesting at the expense of himself or others. The origin of the bizarre in the National Socialist regime and the acceptance of it by the general public in Germany can be traced back, precisely, to their insufficient sense of humor. For instance, amidst the glorification of the tall, blond, pure Nordic

[1] Général Mordacq, "Clemenceau en Amérique," *Revue de Paris,* 1er février 1933, p. 577.

race, spokesmen of the National Socialists conveniently overlook two obvious facts. First, some of the highest dignitaries of the regime are neither dolichocephalic nor tall nor blond. Second, it is also conveniently forgotten that some of the most gifted Germans of modern times, as shown in Franz Weidenreich's study, *Die Rasse und der Körperbau,* Leibnitz, Beethoven, Kant, Goethe, for example, were dark round heads.[1]

The illusion of double personality is said to have a greater frequency among psychic disturbances in Germany than in other countries. *Der Andere* (*The Man Within*), a Tobis film exhibiting the dual personality theme, has had a stupendous success, according to the press. The somewhat strange curiosity for this film and similar dramas and stories manifested by the German public is a phenomenon of the same order as their obedient and voluntary, or at least sufficiently voluntary, acceptance of their authorities' dicta, even of bizarre ones. At the root of both of these aspects of the German national psychology lies, in the last analysis, the Dionysian totalitarian fear of *Zwietracht,* the vehement inner discord to which the German, because of his very "totalitarianism," is subject.

This fear of *Zwietracht,* and the anti-intellectualism which it can generate, becomes a powerful national influence in Germany always after the nation has indulged for some time in a rationalistic analytical reappraisal of values. The latter is prone to take, though usually for a short time only, the form

[1] Cf. Huxley, J. S., and Haddon, A. C., *We Europeans: A Survey of 'Racial' Problems,* New York, Harper & Brothers, 1936, pp. 95 f.: "Already the difficulties in the way of a simple Nordic explanation are apparent to the Nazi 'intelligentsia' and they are now introducing such terms as 'Nordic-Dinaric' and 'Baltic-Nordic' to denote certain very numerous Germans of obviously mixed type—a procedure which at once robs the 'pure race' concept of its meaning. The nationalist German anthropologist, Kossima, in his *Ursprung der Germanen,* says that 'Nordic souls may often be combined with un-Nordic bodies, and a decidedly un-Nordic soul may lurk in a perfectly good Nordic body'!"

of a bacchanalia of skepticism. The totalitarian is apt to plunge headlong into whatever waters he negotiates. For instance, the postwar vogue of Freudianism in Germany, especially in Berlin, produced in the press and in the theater such unbridled sexualism as would have been judged obscene and stopped outright in many other lands.[1] It need not here be argued that it is contrary to historical truth to put the total blame for this, as the National Socialist leaders do, upon the corruptive and corrupted intellectualism of persons other than at least a certain percentage of the Nordic Germans themselves.

The Nazi * policies inspired by anti-intellectualism will be studied further in connection with the totalitarian conception of culture and the new philosophy of education. For the present, and as the background for those we will sketch the parallelism between the present-day flourishing of the Dionysian anti-intellectualism and the great romanticist movement of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. National Socialism may be defined as a form of neo-romanticism; it is romanticism minus pantheism and sentimentality.

Romanticism was a Dionysian revolt against the domination of the French rationalistic enlightenment, against that Apollonian triumph associated with the names of Voltaire, Diderot, D'Alembert, Condorcet, among others. Romanticism was anti-rationalistic; it was interested in the irrational flights of sentiment and imagination. To the self-assuredness of analytical reason it opposed the lure of the mystical. Romanticism was scornful of the analytical reasoning power, as something that merely scratched the surface of life's mysteries; it

[1] Cf. Huxley, A., *Eyeless in Gaza*, London, Chatto & Windus, 1936, pp. 231, 234 f., 281.

* For the explanation of the term *see* p. 368.

reveled, itself, in excursions into the unfathomable depths of the soul, individual or collective. The romanticists sought to penetrate the latter through gathering and studying the creations of folklore, which had been ignored or frankly despised by the blasé enlightenment of the eighteenth century.

In literature, romanticism took the form of *Storm-and-Stress,* so named after Klinger's drama, *Sturm und Drang*—the revolt against the themes and especially the rational forms of classicism and neo-classicism. It was characterized by nationalistic interest in the dim, prehistoric, early historic, and medieval periods, with their epics and legends, moral traditions, and customs; also it was characterized by respect for the operation of natural forces in the historical process. The failure of the French Revolution, with its mathematical-like formulas of the millennium, was attributed by romanticist historians to a vicious and self-defeating rationalistic disregard for those natural forces. The *Germania* of Tacitus, which was discovered in 1507, only now began to do its work of awakening German national consciousness. In music and in the pictorial and plastic arts, romanticism was the search for the expression of and the communion with the subconscious, the sublime, and the infinite. In philosophy, romanticism occupied itself with the transcendental. In the philosophy of education, romanticism was the Rousseauist and Pestalozzian crusade for education in accordance with nature, further poetized through the Froebelian doctrine, inspired by the pantheistic idea of the child as the channel through which "the Absolute floweth."

Kant, in particular, exemplifies the characteristic German evolution of thought. At first, he was entirely under the charm of the French rationalistic enlightenment. He was pleased with its Socratic optimism, which was based upon the

belief that the practical inevitably follows from the theoretical as a logical consequence; that a good action is necessarily generated by a clear knowledge of the good; that in order to improve men, it is sufficient to instruct them; and that human progress is the progress of the *lumières*—the arts and sciences. With a totalitarian enthusiasm, Kant exclaimed: "Don't hesitate to make use of your reasoning power! *Sapere aude!* Such is the teaching of the period of enlightenment." [1] Soon, however, Kant shook off this spell of Apollonianism. Rousseau, whose bust was one of the few adornments of Kant's study room, had aided him in the mental evolution or, rather, revolution. "I had despised ignorant masses," Kant confesses, "but Rousseau put me on the right road; he taught me to value man." [2] It was then that Kant became, again with totalitarian enthusiasm, the protagonist of the supremacy of "practical reason"—the inner voice of conscience—and of character and will power, through which means the "practical reason" operates. To borrow from Professor J. E. Spenlé:

> "It is in order to subject Reason to a critical investigation, to circumscribe its claims, to warn against its dogmatic illusions that Kant undertook his principal work, *Critique of Pure Reason.* Has he not confessed that even if he had 'ruined Knowledge' he had done this in order to 'build a path for Faith'? . . . This chasm between the Intellect, conceived of as a subaltern function busying itself with the realities of the world of senses and perceiving only the exterior appearances of the universe, on the one hand, and the great intuitions which penetrate the inner world, that realm of moral postulates, of practical im-

[1] Quoted in Spenlé, J. E., *La Pensée allemande de Luther à Nietzsche,* Paris, Armand Colin, 1934, p. 31.
[2] *Ibid.,* p. 40.

peratives, of religious beliefs, and of all the values and volitions of the inner world—the only means that bring us into the presence of the Absolute—on the other hand, grew ever wider in the post-Kantian idealistic metaphysics. . . . In opposition to the humanistic Reason, Germanism preached the gospel of Life conceived of as a dynamism, which defies all calculations, which is fraught with inavoidable and salutary antagonisms, which is conducive to dangers and risks at one and the same time redoubtable and healthy, and which is characterized by inequalities and aristocratic hierarchies, warlike dicta, hard and severe, also by the desire of expansion and the instinct for unrestrained domination."[1]

Next, in accordance with the psychological law of German totalitarian "dialectical" antagonisms, the sway of romanticism and idealism was displaced by an ever-growing influence of materialism—philosophical, politico-economic, and moral. The process began around the middle of the nineteenth century. It was nourished not wholly by alien influences; such materialistic luminaries as Feuerbach, Büchner, among others, were Germans. Materialism reached a high degree of totalitarian confusion and licentiousness in politics, in literature, in the theater, in the press, and in particular in the night life of the larger cities of Germany during the closing period of the World War and the decade following. The effects of that half-century-long ascendancy of materialism and skepticism, culminating in the orgies of the neo-sophistic hedonistic individualism of the decade 1920-1930, are being now washed off by the high tide of a neo-romantic totalitarian anti-intellectualism, a new *Storm-and-Stress*. Unfortunately, it is in the nature of

[1] Spenlé, J. E., *op. cit.*, pp. 180 ff.

"totalitarianism" that the present-day neo-romanticism should throw overboard many worth-while accomplishments of the previous half-century, together with its false gods and unhealthy exaggerations. Again, in accordance with the law of German totalitarian contrasts, or "dialectics," the present-day *Storm-and-Stress* movement, which succeeded the recent rise of materialism, is more impetuous, more pervading, in a word, more totalitarian than its forerunner, the great romanticism, which displaced at the turn of the nineteenth century the comparatively mild materialistic rationalism that was in vogue during the later part of the eighteenth century.

Especially important for the comprehension of the moral crusade undertaken by the National Socialists, interwoven as it was with their quest for political power, is the fact that the neo-romanticist Dionysian revolt against the new Apollonian domination of materialistic rationalism and its moral and political implications arose at the turn of the present century among the school youths of Germany. This movement, the former participants of which now play a prominent role in the National Socialist regime, is known as the *Jugendbewegung*. It had several branches, Migrating Birds (*Wandervögel*), Free German Youth (*Freideutsche Jugend*), Path Finders (*Pfadfinder*), with later cross sections, like the one attempted by the Socialists—the Socialist Youth—which was soon paralleled by the Catholic Youth Association. As a whole, however, the *Jugendbewegung*, in its original form and in all its branches basically was the expression of the same longings and yearnings of the German youth.

For its participants, the *Jugendbewegung* was an escape from the sophisticated stuffiness and debilitating artificialities of the Apollonian urbanism into the Dionysian communion with nature, operated through extensive hiking, camping, fraterni-

zation with the very soil of the fatherland. The younger adolescents found in the *Jugendbewegung* the welcomed change from too rigid a school and home discipline—a glorious Robinson-Crusoe-like adventure under the mild supervision of truly understanding teachers. The older boys and girls came, or were brought, to draw romantic inspiration from a contrast, perhaps exaggerated, between the baffling, faithless, sophistic word-juggling of the city-rooted literature on the one hand, and on the other, the old German myths and legends told and discussed around the campfire, the folk songs and dances performed for the entertainment of their hosts, the villagers. The young people were also led to perceive the difference, perhaps overstated by their leaders, between the eccentricities of the individualistic *bohème* where everyone was a self-indulging law unto himself and a dubious measure of all things, on the one hand, and the warmth of group life combined with strictly observed proprieties of language and behavior—even the indulgence in smoking being held an offense leading to expulsion—on the other; between the hypocritical mannerism of the urban social intercourse and the frankness and friendliness of the camp and hostel life, where instinctive modesty and decent inhibitions were cultivated. The thoughts and talk of the older adolescents were, not unnaturally, often centered on the corruptions of an unrestrained profit system as contrasted with the good fellowship, actual or imaginary, of agricultural masters and workers.

The first generation of the former participants of the Youth Movement, before it found political spokesmen, or exploiters, in the National Socialist movement, had found literary expression and inspiration in the works of Waggerl, the Austrian cousin and advocate of the "Back to the Soil" movement; also in the writings of Hermann Burte, the author of *Wiltfeber,*

the Eternal German, the eloquent celebrant of communion with nature and the prophet of war on the "poison-generating" intellect. These and some foreign writers like Pearl Buck met with an enthusiastic reception among the young awakening Dionysians and neo-romanticists, prior to the announcement of the "Blood and Soil" formula of Hitler, Rosenberg, and Krieck. But perhaps even more significant was the philosophical influence of Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West.* Professor Spenlé gave an apt appraisal of that influence:

> "The Occident has, according to Spengler, fallen into the lowest phase of civilization it has known, the one characterized by moral senility and arteriosclerosis. In vain had Germanism brought to the Occident, while it was in the throes of the decadence of the Roman Empire, the reserves of an intact youthfulness, of a fresh new blood at the same time as it injected into the Occidental mind the unspent exploratory energies, that longing for the dynamic infinite, transformer of the real. Those energies and that yearning constitute the true contribution of the Nordic man, or, to use the favorite expression of Spengler, 'the Faustian man.' Rationalism, mechanization, industrialism, and urbanism, are so many clear symptoms of deep decadence. The spirit which makes its imprint on the present-day Occidental civilization and which is called 'socialism' permeates it. It is for the German youth to understand that times have revolved, that it is necessary to renounce the false sentimentalities and reveries, above all, the intellectual refinements of decadent civilization. Having comprehended this, they should understand also that their real task is to devote themselves to the practical needs of the future, which are essentially political needs. . . . The Ger-

man youth . . . has enthusiastically applauded his criticism of the Occidental spirit and has listened with undivided attention to his appeal for adopting new purely German ethics of work and conduct." [1]

To the neo-romantic graduates of the Youth Movement, the lads and lasses who camped and hiked through the country in the course of the years 1900-1914, Adolf Hitler could not have had a better introduction than when pictured in his knickers and with a knapsack, hiking in the Bavarian mountains or gazing intently over the plains that stretch northward and thinking his "German thoughts." They recognized in him a kindred Dionysian soul, combined with an unusual will power and daring. Whatever may have been the Führer's artifices of propaganda,[2] he is, in substance, a profoundly Dionysian nature. As characterized by Herr Georg Schott, the author of a biography of Hitler, *Volksbuch vom Hitler,* so far the only one approved by Hitler, the Führer is a *Johannisnatur,* a "Midsummernight temperament." How, indeed, without reference to his Dionysianism can one explain, for example, his choice of banner—in many regards inconvenient—the swastika, purported to be the symbol of undying and regenerating life? The manhood and womanhood of 1930-1933 which voted and acclaimed Adolf Hitler into supreme power was not shocked or annoyed by the introduction of the new German greeting, *Heil Hitler;* in their camps and hostels they had used the word *"Heil"* in place of the conventional forms of salutation. From the campfires around which the decadencies, actual or imaginary, of the rationalistic west-

[1] Spenlé, J. E., *op. cit.,* pp. 186 ff.

[2] Cf. Mowrer, E. A., *Germany Puts the Clock Back,* New York, William Morrow and Co., 1933, especially the chapter, "A Showman of Genius"; also, Stead, W., *Hitler: Whence and Whither?* New York, Review of Reviews Corporation, 1934.

ern civilization were subjected to a fiery criticism by the *Jugendbewegung* adolescents of two decades ago, the road was easily made to the Third Reich * bonfire of the books written by actual or imaginary corruptors of the German people. It was made under the double influence of the National Socialist teachings and of a reaction to the postwar unbridled licentiousness, political and moral, of the materialistic *bohème* and communistic agents. Freedom of thought, as Herr Gottfried Benn explains in his study, *Der neue Staat und die Intellectuellen* (1933), appeared to a great many people in Germany as freedom for destruction.

The wanton postwar rationalistic wit and irresponsible Apollonian frolics of skepticism and satire, coupled with the communistic agitation for a Marxist, materialistic, "proletarian" revolution, had filled with horror the Dionysian; they threatened to rob him of all inner equilibrium. The old saying of Goethe was recalled, "It is easy to be witty when one has respect for nothing." [1] This Dionysian fear of *Zersetzungshybris,* disintegrating ideas, closely relates the pre-Hitler neo-romantic Youth Movement to the National Socialist anti-intellectualistic crusade in defense of pure Germanism, in which campaign Dionysian "totalitarianism" contributes to a confusion between the nationally useful and the simply irrational. In the happy words of Herr Friedrich Sieburg, a man of moderate political views:

> "National and irrational merged into one; the exhortation to be reasonable encountered a defiant insistence on the claims of the national, with the inevitable result that

* For the explanation of the term *see* pp. 405, 408, 415, 419.

[1] Cf. Dietrich, O., *Die philosophischen Grundlagen des Nationalsozialismus,* Breslau, 1934; Sharp, C., "Hitler Will Stay: German Dialogue," *The Living Age,* August, 1933.

anyone who acted irrationally thought that he was acting nationally, and that, conversely, anyone who essayed the difficult task of acting rationally was decried as anti-national. How unjust and yet how natural!" [1]

This Dionysian atmosphere was not created by the National Socialists but was skillfully exploited by them and intensified. Their rise cannot, however, be fully understood without viewing a little more closely the German's natural political bent.

THE TOTAL MAN AND THE TOTALITARIAN STATE

When Adolf Hitler condemned in strong language the "halfness" of the Germany of the Weimar Constitution, that is the period of time 1919-1933, denounced "this entire Sodom and Gomorrah," pilloried the educational philosophy which "fostered halfness," and demanded the restoration in education and government of the ideal of "total man," uncompromisingly devoted to the solution of "the important problems of life," [2] his words fell on receptive ears. His fellow-countrymen drank up the totalitarian wine of his message. One of the two basic emotions of their heart—the other being the longing for the infinite—is, as we have already pointed out, the desire for *Ganzheit,* wholeness, oneness of purpose and effort, which is the substance of the *furor teutonicus,* that German impetus which was noticed by the Romans in the earliest German arrivals at the eastern boundary of the Roman Empire.

In order to visualize more clearly the workings of German "totalitarianism" in the organization and conduct of government, it may be useful first to consider, for example, the ex-

[1] Sieburg, F., *Germany, My Country,* London, Jonathan Cape, 1935, p. 236.
[2] *Mein Kampf,* München, Verlag Franz Eher Nachfolger [Edition 1930], SS. 258, 269, 271.

pression of this basic trait of the German mind in some significant non-political matters like the tendency to monistic thinking and in the wholeheartedness which the typical German shows in the pursuit of his *Beruf* or *Fach,* a vocation or profession.

In French philosophy eclectic doctrines have prevailed; English philosophy has been characterized by a preference for dualistic or pluralistic doctrines, "compromise" doctrines which acknowledge more than one ultimate reality. German philosophy, on the contrary, has been predominantly monistic. The history of German philosophy has been marked by the prevalence of doctrines which uncompromisingly maintain that the ultimate reality is just one in number, idealism asserting that it is spirit, and materialism clamoring that the true and only reality is physical or material, that is, knowable to our five senses. It is, certainly, not a mere geographical accident either, that the new important contemporary school of thought in psychology, *Gestaltpsychologie,* has originated in Germany. The fundamental position of the *Gestalt* school, which is often designated in English as "wholeness psychology," is, so to speak, totalitarian; it is to the effect that the human mind reacts as a whole to the situation as a whole, rather than in separate responses to separate stimuli, as the behaviorist school asserts.

This Dionysian fondness for monistic thinking, that is for reducing, even at the price of deceptive oversimplification, the complexity of phenomena to the working of just one principle, has found an interesting reflection in certain postwar plans for the restoration of economic optimism and the re-establishment of Germany's prewar high industrial and commercial position in the world. Coal, in which Germany remained rich even after the loss of some important mining regions under

the Treaty of Versailles, was declared the philosopher's stone. The people were taught that no country is worth more, as a world power, than the quantity and quality of its coal, on which count Germany stood very high. The expression was coined, paraphrasing the ancient philosopher, "Coal is the measure of all things." The coal dust was pronounced the subtle but all-pervading dyestuff that colors modern civilization, and the foundation of the future of Germany was said to rest on coal. The most advanced modern nation was defined as the one that can extract the greatest amount of energy from a pound of coal; the Germans were advised that their political wisdom and political science both with regard to internal and foreign affairs should be based on the knowledge of the coal industry (*Staatsweisheit muss Kohlenweisheit werden*) and that the German people should think, politically, in terms of coal.[1]

It must be borne in mind, also, that National Socialism as a political doctrine is a totalitarian conciliation as well as a skillful utilization of two powerful forces which used to neutralize or defeat each other, namely, nationalism and socialism. We take the latter term in the sense of a struggle, cost what it may, for greater social justice in the distribution of wealth as the means of well-being; and we employ the term nationalism to designate the sentiment of ownership and participation in the sovereign possessions, economic interests, and spiritual ideals and aspirations, past and present, of the nation. Nationalism was represented in Germany, as elsewhere, by the classes of stronger economic status. The masses of economically insecure laboring people were not irresponsive to the voice of the national folklore, created, indeed, by anonymous

[1] Baumont, M., *La grosse industrie allemande et le charbon,* Paris, Gaston Doin et C-ie, 1928, especially pp. 668 ff.

members of popular masses, nor to the voice of national pride and vital interests. They could be, however, and actually were readily swung into the belief, preached by most socialist parties and especially by the socialist extremists known as Communists or Bolshevists, that social justice cannot be hoped for except through the international effort of organized Socialists or Communists, as the case may be, through the war of all laboring classes upon all property-owning classes of the world. The success of this war was promised and its acquisitions were to be consolidated by the obliteration of all national differences, beginning with boundaries. As long as the national State did not make an earnest effort, or at least did not make the promise, to secure for the masses a greater degree of well-being, especially a larger measure of economic security, the masses were deviated from their natural nationalism by their desire for social justice, which was kept stirred as well as exaggerated by socialistic and communistic propaganda. The Hitler party, the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (the National Socialist German Workers' Party), in abbreviation *Nazi,* has promised to achieve a measure of social justice within the framework of the national heritage and aspirations, rather than in the orthodox socialistic and communistic internationalism.[1]

With relation to the German's wholehearted interest in

[1] Cf. Krieck, E., *Nationalpolitische Erziehung,* Leipzig, Armanen-Verlag, 1933, S. 42: "*National Socialism*—the term indicates the content, the purpose, and the meaning of the movement. Through socialism, nationalism receives a new content, while socialism obtains through nationalism a new purpose and the possibility of realization. *National Socialism* is the expression of revolutionary principle; as such it gives direction to us in solving our common national problems, racial, political, economic, cultural, and educational, which have been set to us by our vital needs, our history, and our destiny. The term *National Socialism* is the symbol which embraces the movement as a whole (*das alles umfasst der symbolishe Name der Bewegung in der Totalität*)."

his occupation, M. Jacques Rivière, in a volume entitled *L'Allemand: réflexions d'un prisonnier de guerre,* aptly remarked that work is not to the Germans the painful obligation and punishment which it often is to others, but that they go into it with their whole heart, as if yielding to a powerful mania, and fall back into work as others fall back into sin. Marx and the Marxists have erred in failing to realize that the German temperament makes the average German worker little receptive to the Marxist talk about labor as a merchandise, and to the promises of easy work and abundant leisure under the communistic regime. The German likes work almost for its own sake, and his leisure is, more often than not, occupied by an intensive hobby, in which again he rather cherishes than shuns hard work. Spengler's idea of "the new ethics of work, specifically German ethics," [1] opposed to the point of view which regards working hours as hours of damnation, is much more comprehensible to the average German than the Marxist thunders against the hardships and horrors of hired labor in a capitalistic society. Some students of German affairs expected a serious weakening of the Nazi regime through *res oeconomicae,* as a result of the outside world's disapproval of the excess of the Nazi policies, domestic and international. The masses seem, however, prepared to respond sympathetically, on the whole, to the Nazi appeal summarized in Julius Schmidhauser's *Kampf um das geistige Reich*—the exhortation to show the world an unprecedented example of an *Arbeitsvolk,* a nation strong by reason of its devotion to work and capable of gaining an economic Sedan in the great economic world war and of winning a high place in the world through victory in the great battle of labor.

From the university teacher, who does, perhaps, the most

[1] Spenlé, J. E., *op. cit.,* p. 187.

far-reaching creative work, to the cemetery guard, who does, probably, the least creative labor, the Germans practice a totalitarian devotion to work. What William James wrote about Wundt would be true of the average German university instructor:

> "He isn't a genius, he is a *professor*—a being whose duty is to know everything, and have his opinion about everything, connected with his *Fach.* Wundt has the most prodigious faculty of appropriating and preserving knowledge, and as for opinions, he takes *au grand sérieux* his duties here. He says of each possible subject, 'Here I must have an opinion. Let's see! What shall it be? That I will do, etc., etc.' "[1]

In a letter of General Mangin, who certainly was not the mildest adversary of Germany in the World War, written during the postwar occupation of the Rhine Zone, there is found the following passage:

> "Visited the cemetery. . . . The graves of our prisoners of war of 1871 and the World War are excellently kept, in fact, so well that I gave a hundred marks to the chief attendant of the cemetery for his men."[2]

Totalitarian as he is in his thinking and in his devotion to his occupation (*Beruf* or *Fach*), the German naturally expects from his supreme political and military authorities above all an undivided devotion to duty; he would much rather have as a leader a man of single-track mind, fierce, shall we say Cyclopean, or at times even blind in his pull at the rudder, than a suavely discursive and wittily analytical skeptic. His

[1] *Letters of William James,* Boston, Little, Brown & Co., 1920, Vol. I, pp. 263 f.

[2] "Lettres de Rhénanie," *Revue de Paris,* 1er avril 1936, p. 485.

fellow countrymen could not have bestowed on Bismarck a distinction higher, in his own and in the German public's eye, than the nickname of the Iron Chancellor. Contrary to the rationalistic Apollonian conception of a superman as an intellectual genius, the German's ideal of national leadership is a moral superman, a man unflinchingly obedient to the "categorical imperative" of his outlook upon life, in other words, to the exacting voice of his conscience. A French biographer of Ludendorff, General Buat, found neat expression when he characterized Ludendorff as follows:

> "In this man everything holds together. He is made of one piece—he is a monolith. The success of Germany being the sole object of his endeavor, everything is subordinated to this goal, all means are good." [1]

Better known to the public and more genial, Fieldmarshal von Hindenburg won the affection of the German masses not only by the victories, which were in reality achieved thanks to Ludendorff's superior generalship, but, precisely, by his "monolithic" character, his Siegfriedian, unbending devotion to duty, and the grim effort to beat the overwhelming coalition of the Allied empires. The average German saw in the soldierly face of the gray-haired general the "total man," the reincarnation of the German titanic vitality and the primeval impetus harnessed to the pursuit of a single goal.

Hitler is given, in the official Nazi publications, among other qualifications, also that of the "man made of oak," *ein Mann aus Eichenholz.*[2] Whatever more serious or less serious

[1] Buat, E. A. L., *Ludendorff,* Paris, Payot, 1920, p. 260.

[2] *See* the very interesting and valuable source book on the person of Hitler and on the Nazi movement compiled by a group of equanimous opponents: Havorka, N. [Editor], *Zwischenspiel Hitler: Ziel und Wirklichkeit des Nationalsozialismus,* Wien-Leipzig, Reinhold-Verlag, 1932, S. 139.

defects as a man and the master of the destinies of Germany will be found in him by the future historian, Hitler has a totalitarian, indeed, ascetically "monolithic" devotion to the labors and duties of his office as he understands them. This Dionysian totalitarian trait has won him favor with the masses of the Germans, not less than another important Dionysian peculiarity—the mystic, fanatical belief in the rebirth of the aboriginal irresistible Germanism which had defied and then partially destroyed and supplanted for centuries the Roman Empire itself.[1]

Hitler has repeatedly announced to the world—as for instance in March, 1936, on the occasion of the remilitarization of the Rhine Zone—that "there are not two or three different opinions in Germany but only one." His opinion makes the law of the land. General Goering justified the summary execution on June 30, 1934, of an unknown number of Hitler's opponents among the Nazi themselves by declaring that orders of the Leader were "the law and will of the people" and needed no further justification or explanation.

Words and acts like these do not shock the average German, totalitarian in his political instinct, any more than did Ludendorff's doctrine of total war (*der totale Krieg*). In it the eminent totalitarian general seeks to refute the old theorists like Clausewitz, who thought that war was a phase of politics and one of the possible roads of the historical evolution of a nation. To Ludendorff, war is the only road to a brighter future; this road shall be taken by the entire nation, men, women, and children. The "total war" shall begin without the formalities of a declaration of war and shall be conducted without mercy, no effective means of destruction of the enemy's

[1] Havorka, N. [Editor], *Zwischenspiel Hitler: Ziel und Wirklichkeit des Nationalsozialismus,* Wien-Leipzig, Reinhold-Verlag, 1932, S. 139.

life and property to be scorned because inhuman. It is interesting to note that the readers and admirers of Ludendorff seem to forget, in their totalitarian resignation or thrill, as does the *Kriegsherr* Ludendorff himself, that the future "total war" may turn out to be a boomerang as did gas, the submarine, fire-throwers, etc., in the World War.

To the monistic, totalitarian mind, the idea must remain alien of a pluralistic or democratic State, that is a national government which is based on a reasonable compromise between various interests and conflicts, individual and collective, within the nation, and which seeks thus to achieve the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

To show their contrast, the political creeds of some outstanding Englishmen and Germans should be recalled. John Stuart Mill taught that the best form of government is the one in which the sovereignty, or the supreme power, is vested in the entire aggregate of the community; it is the best because it promotes a higher form of national character than any other. To Nietzsche, on the contrary, democracy is not only a degenerate form of politics, but it is also an expression of a degenerating, declining type of man.

Hegel taught that the individual cannot have any claims against the State. To Hegel, the supreme governmental authority is the mystical General Will, the will of all for the good of all as over against the individual will for the good of one at the expense of all. The individual, reasoned Hegel, did not securely possess in the pre-State condition even the right to live; his life could be taken from him by any man stronger or craftier than himself. The State, on the other hand, protects the individual's life which cannot be taken from him with impunity by anyone, but, logically, can be claimed by the State alone. The individual then has no rights against the

State to which he owes all his rights because from it he has received the basic right—the right to live. Only under the protection of the State can the individual's spirit develop. The Reason of History instructs, Hegel was convinced, that Subjective Freedom, the individual's freedom, can be realized only through Objective Freedom—"the laws of *real* Freedom"; the mere Contingent or Subjective will must be subjugated to the General, or Objective, or Rational Will, guided by the Absolute Spirit.[1] To the English mind the political doctrine of Hegel, *doctor subtilissimus,* suspiciously resembled the point of view of a typical Prussian official.[2] To Dean Inge, for example, the "common will" is "a stick for the backs of minorities, who are first deprived of any effective representation, and are then invited to admire the 'justice' and 'true liberty' under which they are flayed."[3] Spengler, on the other hand, writing under the regime of the Weimar democracy (that is, the political regime governed by the Constitution adopted by the National Constituent Assembly that sat at Weimar in 1919), proved a faithful interpreter of the totalitarian instincts of his nation when he said:

> "What Metternich meant by 'chaos' which he tried to avert from Europe as long as possible by resigned and uncreative activity, by maintaining and preserving the existing state of things, was not so much the decay of the system of individual national states, with its balance of power,

[1] Hegel, G. W. F., *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts, oder Naturrecht und Staatswissenschaft im Grundrisse,* Berlin, Eduard Gans, 1821, B. VIII; *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte,* Leipzig, Verlag von Felix Meiner, 1920, Bde II-IV, esp. B. IV, "Die Lage der Gegenwart," SS. 932-938.

[2] Wingfield-Stratford, E., *England Muddles Through,* New York, The Macmillan Company, 1932, p. 872.

[3] *More Lay Thoughts of a Dean,* New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1932, p. 297.

as it was the decay in the individual countries of the dignity of the State (*Staatshoheit*), a conception which is now almost lost to us. What we recognize as 'order' today and express in 'Liberal' constitutions, is nothing but anarchy become a habit. We call it democracy, parliamentary national self-government, but in fact it is the mere non-existence of a conscious, responsible authority, a government—that is, a true State." [1]

To the average German a willing obedience to the authority of the State is a necessary and sublime reality of group life—the attitude of mind which National Socialism has merely revived and intensified but because of which the half-hearted liberalism of the post-Bismarckian period (1890-1914) and the experiment of the Weimar Constitution (1919-1933) were destined to be short-lived. The totalitarian cannot accept the motto, *e pluribus unum;* his motto is, *ex uno unum;* to him the State must be one will and the personality of the State can be realized in one person only. He therefore welcomed Hitler's promise made in *Mein Kampf,* several years before the Führer's advent to power:

"There shall be no majority decisions, but only those of responsible individuals, and the word 'council' (*Rat*) will be restored to its original meaning. Decisions shall be taken by one man, though he will have by his side advisers whom he may consult." [2]

[1] Reprinted from *Hour of Decision,* by Oswald Spengler, New York, 1934, p. 34, by permission of and special arrangement with Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., authorized publishers; in the original, *Jahre der Entscheidung,* München, Beck'schez Verlag, 1933, SS. 23 f.

Note: To avoid misunderstanding, it must be mentioned that though the Führer is in accord with Spengler's fundamental concept of the totalitarian State, he disapproves of Spengler's contempt for the masses. Himself "a child of the masses," Hitler does not want to be a Caesar after Spengler's model. Heiden, K., *op. cit.,* p. 334.

[2] *Op. cit.,* p. 501.

The republican parliamentary governments, national and local, established in Germany under the confusion of defeat in the World War were never more than fragile creeping plants which had their precariously short roots in a few cracks and splits formed, as a result of exhaustion from the war, in the surface of the bed rock of the German anti-parliamentarian political "totalitarianism." The facility with which the Socialists came at the close of the World War to a position of predominance in the government of Prussia herself was entirely deceptive. It was made possible by the political confusion and indifference of the middle and the lower middle classes, unaccustomed to self-government and well satisfied with the paternalistic rule of the princes. The place made vacant by the abdication of the hereditary rulers was left in substance unoccupied until it was filled by the National Socialists, who answered the Dionysian qualifications for German leadership. With a facility which may appear almost miraculous—unless the Dionysian peculiarities of the German mind are recalled—Adolf Hitler disposed of the Socialist-Centrist parliamentary regime. It had remained on the mere surface of the body national and could be easily brushed off:

> "The last Parliament, to which the name of free can with a tinge of propriety be applied, met in the Kroll Opera House in Potsdam, a symbolic spot. . . . To the accompaniment of cat calls, the speaker declared the Reichstag dissolved until it pleased the government to summon it again. The dictatorship was established in legal form; the German republic ceased to be."[1]

It is, indeed, a revealing historical fact that a quite impressive number of German men and women, while their civic

[1] Clark, R. T., *The Fall of the German Republic,* London, George Allen and Unwin.

liberties were fully respected and protected by the democratic parliamentary government under the Weimar Constitution, voted of their free will into supreme power the man who had denounced democracy as an alien, un-Germanic regime of weaklings and hypocrites; the man who said—and was generally enough believed—that he was in communion with the true spirit and destiny of Germany and knew best what was good for the German people; the man who was convinced, and declared his conviction in no uncertain terms, that the paragon of all government was the military and civil organization and administration of Prussia,[1] which, of all German lands, was exalted, and correctly, by the Nazi as the "quintessence of Germany" (*distilliertes Deutschland*).[2] There was nothing shocking or jarring in such a program of government to the ear of the totalitarian German public.

The German public, further, seems unperturbed by the lack of practical clarity in the basic principle of the Hitlerian State, "the necessary connection between absolute responsibility and absolute authority."[3] The absolute character of the Führer's authority being evident,[4] the nature of his responsibility is vague indeed, for it appears to be excluded by the very fact of his absolute authority. To whom can a man be answerable who is "the law of the land"? The Kaiser used to say, whether sincerely or not, that he was responsible before God. The Führer is much less explicit in the expression of his attitude

[1] *Mein Kampf, cit.*, S. 501.

[2] Schmahl, E., *Der Aufstieg der nationalen Idee*, Stuttgart, Berlin, Leipzig, Union Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1934, S. 159.

[3] *Mein Kampf, cit.*, S. 502.

[4] The Reichstag, by the Enabling Act of 1933 extended for another quadrennium in 1937, gave absolute power to the Chancellor-and-Leader, Herr Adolf Hitler, and his Cabinet. The Enabling Act provides that the Cabinet may make laws by ordinance, even including such laws as are not in accord with the Weimar Constitution (which has not yet been formally abrogated).

toward the Supreme Being. So his only judge appears to be his own conscience, with its unforeseeable Dionysian movements.

Once voted into practically unlimited supreme power, Hitler has been sustained amidst domestic economic difficulties and international diplomatic tension by the proverbial German totalitarian habit of trustful obedience to the State, which Nietzsche called "the lust for believing and obeying."[1] The Führer's demand for *Gleichschaltung,* the universal national "co-ordination," which in reality means the subordination of everybody and everything to his dicta, does not seem seriously to antagonize the masses of Germans even after the excitement of the installation of the new regime and the exultation of the new hopes have lost at least a certain degree of their initial grip on the national emotion.

The German totalitarian obedience to the totalitarian authority of the State embodied in one man must not, however, be taken for pure and simple servility to a political boss or bosses. It is, rather, what Dr. Richard Müller-Freienfels, in his study of the psychology of the German people, calls freely accepted discipline as a form of social cohesion (*die soziale Bindung durch freiwillig übernommenen Zwang*).[2] Barring the sporadic individual cases of interested or cowardly servility pure and simple, from which no people is free, the true basis of the German's willing and almost cheerful constant obedience to the State in all matters is his sentiment of ownership and participation in the great body national; it is the sensation of being a cellule, however microscopic, of a colossal organism, towering over the outside world—the sensation of

[1] Cf. Tschupick, K., *Ludendorff: Die Tragödie des Fachmanns,* Wien und Leipzig, Verlag Dr. Hans Epstein, 1930, S. 390.

[2] Müller-Freienfels, R., *Psychologie des deutschen Mensches und seiner Kultur,* München, Oskar Beck, 1922, SS. 92-104.

being at one and the same time master and servant, which makes the German both proud and docile. Consequently, the German totalitarian political temperament exonerates the Führer from all inner contradiction when he, on the one hand, calls the German citizens to practice obedience to the will of the State as complete as the subordination to the military discipline demanded of a soldier, and when he declares, on the other hand, that "it is a greater honor to be a citizen of the Third Reich than King in a foreign land," and pronounces the German citizen "the master of the Reich" (*der Herr des Reiches*).[1]

The truth of the matter is, however, that this sovereign is, at best, reduced to a dubious exercise of authority from the wrong end, so to speak. The Führer described his method of consultation with the nation as follows:

> "I shall not say, 'I should like to take this step, but first I must secure support; I must be protected by a vote.' No. The National Socialist leadership will never take that attitude. First it will make its decision, then say to the people: 'Now we have taken this step, pass judgment on it!' "[2]

Maurice Barrès, analyzing the mentality of the German victors in the Franco-Prussian War, showed felicity of expression when he said of Herr Asmus, the mobilized young professor, "proud of the pride of the King of Prussia" who had just been proclaimed the Emperor of Germany in the Gallery of Mirrors at Versailles, the palace of Louis XIV:

> "Hereditary war-like sentiments, for a long time dormant in the young professor, suddenly came to life. He

[1] *Mein Kampf, cit.,* S. 491.
[2] Wireless to the New York *Times,* Weimar, July 4, 1936.

rejoiced as in a virtue at finding himself deprived of individuality and become one humble molecule in a great body." [1]

One of the Führer's lieutenants, Baldur von Schirach, was in all probability entirely sincere when he wrote in a song, intended for the repertoire of the Hitler Youth:

"Free we are through service;
In it we find a higher freedom than in independence!"

Had not Goethe said that obedience to genius was the highest form of freedom? At all events, a nation made of merely servile or stupidly obedient individuals cannot ever achieve, under the conditions of modern international competition, a cultural, industrial, and military strength like that possessed by Germany.

Grave dangers, nevertheless, not only to the outside world but also to the welfare of the German nation itself, are involved in the totalitarian obedience, even though of a philosophized kind, to the totalitarian State. The present-day leaders of the Third Reich and the vast majority of its adult inhabitants—over twenty-five years of age—received their education and enjoyed free development under the previous regimes: those of the Kaiser and the Weimar Republic. Will their successors not be handicapped, even in so far as German national interests alone are concerned, by the regime of strict controls now prevailing? The Führer and his immediate subordinates appear to realize this in their Apollonian moments, but are perhaps unable or unwilling to draw the necessary practical conclusions and to relax their control of the life of the nation.

As never before, not even in Prussia during the reign of

[1] *Colette Baudoche,* New York, George H. Doran Co., 1918, p. 88.

William I, the harsh father of Frederick the Great, when at least the upper class enjoyed many liberties, the German nation is now subjected, still perhaps willingly enough, to the unlimited supreme authority of the State (*Staatshoheit*) invested in the person of the Leader and Chancellor of the Third Reich. The Dionysian masters of Germany, the Führer and his closest associates and advisers, understand well, at least they undoubtedly ought to do so in their Apollonian hours of cool analysis and self-criticism, the danger of making the nation under their control into a people of bent backs, rather than of squared shoulders, on which a nation can be borne up to a stable position of power in the modern world. They understand, even though they are apt to forget it in their Dionysian intoxication with power and impetus, that, to paraphrase Keyserling, the man of ability inherited from the previous regimes can be retained—just as a draught-horse, a creature "without significance" [1]—but hardly can be fostered under the conditions of the totalitarian control. Hence the several pages on the value of personality written in *Mein Kampf,* which strike an unprejudiced reader as additional sophistry in support of the personal rule of the Führer and his lieutenants.

The exegesis of the real or supposed thought of the Führer on personality is interesting as given by Dr. Alfred Rosenberg in his volume, *Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts,*[2] for this book is next in importance, among the National Socialist sources of inspiration and guidance, to *Mein Kampf* itself. Dr. Rosenberg, whom the Führer is reported to believe the brightest among his lieutenants and the only one worth reading even by the Führer himself, was given the highest distinction the

[1] Keyserling, H., *op. cit.,* p. 117.

[2] This title should read in translation: *The Creative Faith of the Twentieth Century.*

Third Reich can bestow on an author. A copy of the *Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts* was deposited side by side with a copy of *Mein Kampf* in the concrete of the cornerstone of the National Socialist Convention House, laid by the Führer during the convention in the fall of 1935, in Nuremberg (a preferred community of the Third Reich because it is the scene of the beginnings of the Nazi rise to power). The manner in which Dr. Rosenberg seeks to reconcile the universal *Gleichschaltung,* after the model of the Prussian army, with the cultivation of the inner self (the free personality of the individual) deserves mentioning because, among other reasons, it is one of the bases of the philosophy of education in the Third Realm.

Dr. Rosenberg assigns a new meaning for the current ideas of freedom and authority; this new meaning is suggested to him by his "racial-spiritual philosophy of life." The national character, reasons Dr. Rosenberg, though it is not "single-racial" in its origin, is not the result of an evenly proportionate admixture of the various races which entered into its composition; the national character is dominated by the "basic race," which decides the nation's general culture, political temperament, and general outlook upon life. Since both the personality of a racially normal individual and the national type are, in "their deepest source," one and the same thing—that is the creation of the dominant single blood strain—there cannot be any real discord or opposition between the full expression or "realization" of the individual and the "realization" of the national type. Properly enlightened, every true German is capable of "perceiving intuitively the primeval German type of man," that "spiritual-racial" creator of Germanism; as a result, a new—or better a new-old—type of national living is created, the mode of living natural for the "new and German type of man, rectangular in body and soul." It is the

duty of a true German government to contribute by rigorous discipline to the propagation of the "racial-spiritual" form in order to offset the subjective, deceptive practices of false freedom on the part of the individuals "sunk in licentious subjectivism and the conventional point of view." Thus, concludes Dr. Rosenberg, the "Nordic racial soul" is created, the primary characteristic of which is "the inner recognition of the racial type as the highest value and the guiding star of the total existence" of the Germans.[1]

The future historian will find out how much, or how little, success the National Socialist period in the history of Germany achieved in the realization of that miraculous combination of dictatorship and freedom, and of that wondrous union between totalitarian obedience to the functionaries of the State and unhampered development of personality. Our own task is restricted to comprehending the present-day Germany rather than predicting the future of that nation, except indirectly, in so far as a definite philosophy of education for leadership can, if functioning over a sufficiently long period of time, foretell, of itself, at least some features of that future. As a further preparation for a subsequent study of the National Socialist theory and practice of education for leadership, we will now briefly review the thoroughgoing and all-embracing controls exercised by the totalitarian State over the fundamental aspects, spiritual and physical, of the life of the nation.

[1] Rosenberg, A., *Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts,* München, Hoheneichen-Verlag, 1930, SS. 497 ff.

THE CONTROLS EXERCISED BY THE TOTALITARIAN STATE: PHILOSOPHICAL, CULTURAL, BIOLOGICAL, RELIGIOUS

"National Socialism must be a philosophy of life," [1] is one of the principal commandments guiding the National Socialist leaders. This commandment is doubtless inspired by a clear insight into the national psychology. Fond of the "monolithic" character in men, the totalitarian German mind is best motivated for action and self-sacrifice by a philosophy of life which is made of one piece of philosophical cloth, so to speak; in which everything holds together, or seems to, and into which the action and personal sacrifice, projected or demanded, fits. Men of all nationalities and races are better prepared to engage wholeheartedly in an arduous action when they grasp the broader, ultimate meaning of the goal. The pragmatic justification of an action by the mere immediate importance of a problem is, however, a sufficient motivation, capable of stirring and sustaining the vital energies, individual and collective, with some nations other than Germans. A general outlook upon life, destiny, and upon life's transcendent values is a far greater necessity for a German than for others, as a motivation for a powerful action. A general outlook upon life can arouse him to a very dynamic and yet sustained action once he is brought to form a "monolithic" or monistic philosophy of life, "made of one piece."

The Führer must have fully understood this peculiarity of his nation, which Keyserling characterizes in a well-taken simile to the effect that if the German should be offered to choose between going straight to heaven or first going to a

[1] Havorka, N., *Zwischenspiel Hitler, cit.*, S. 179.

lecture on heaven, he would surely choose the lecture. Fully understanding this national peculiarity, Hitler had strenuously and patiently lectured for ten years on the future delights and grandeurs of the Third Reich in order to spread his totalitarian outlook upon life before he made a serious bid for power. Herr W. von Mittenburg rightly analyzed the Führer's oratory, when he said that Hitler's speeches in the prolonged campaign for power were "philosophical rather than political." [1] Hitler sought to instill in his listeners a total outlook upon life rather than to present a political argument. He deprecated as wrong the underlying philosophy of life of all the other political parties. His own doctrine of the high mission of the German race and of the Nazi method of carrying it out he declared the only and the fully right one. Were such "monolithic," and also monopolistic, philosophical, and political rhetoric addressed to an Anglo-Saxon audience, it would have antagonized not a small percentage of listeners, who always like to hear what the other side has to say; but in Germany it fell on a grateful, naturally receptive soil. To repeat, has not the history of German philosophy been characterized by monism?

Having planted their monistic doctrine of the Third Reich and the "Creative Faith of the Twentieth Century" in the grateful soil made of the "totalitarianism" of their people, the National Socialist rulers reaped the benefit in the form of absolute power which they intend to keep, using among other primary means also what may be called the philosophical control, that is, the monopoly of teaching the national philosophy of life. On the eve of the assumption of power by Hitler, his newspaper, the *Völkischer Beobachter* of December 11, 1932, published once more the principles that the National

[1] "Der Redner Hitler," *Zwischenspiel Hitler, cit.*, S. 149.

Socialist regime expected to put into practice. The place of honor was reserved, in the list, for the Führer's *Weltanschauung:*

> "The book of our Leader is for the present and the future the basis of the National Socialist principles. It is indispensable for every German and also for any outsider who wishes to penetrate the depth of our doctrine; it is the very essence of National Socialism and should be from now on the new bible of the German people."

In order that this source of guidance and inspiration may prevail, the National Socialist State rests its philosophical control lever on a thorough, all-pervading system of subsidiary gears. Among these are the ones that are trivial methods of all political machines—various police measures of pressure and intimidation, and the economic control which consists in distributing material favors such as jobs, pensions, subventions, credits, etc., to the particularly useful or appreciative members of the commonwealth. Such controls as these do not present any novelty or psychological riddle and they can be dismissed as hardly justifying a further discussion.

But the cultural, biological, and religious controls which have baffled as well as distressed friends of Germany in the outside world but which are explicable in terms of "totalitarianism," seem to deserve a review, even though they are similar, in a measure, to the controls employed by any political dictatorship.

The National Socialist cultural control is, curiously enough, not only in harmony with Hegel's and Treitschke's totalitarian conception of the *Machtstaat* or *Tyrannenstaat* as *Kulturstaat*—the State's absolute power as the guardian and guarantor of national culture—but also with Kuno Francke's

conception of culture as the content of national consciousness.[1] The National Socialist State seeks to direct and shape after its own image everything that can contribute, directly or indirectly, to the formation of a "content of national consciousness." The control is divided among three high functionaries, the Reich Minister for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda; the Reich Minister for Science, Art, and Public Instruction; and the third, the Commissioner of the Führer for the Supervision, Instruction, and Education of the Whole National Socialist Movement, in abbreviation the "Philosophic Dictator," who perhaps supervises the orthodoxy of the other two controllers of the National Socialist culture. Technically, the cultural control consists in strict censorship of all public, and, in so far as possible, all private utterances spoken and written—in fact, of all thoughts expressed directly or symbolically, through plastic, pictorial arts, and music, whether in school, church, theater, or any assembly, including those for sports.

Formerly the cradle and an outstanding nursery of academic freedom which was fairly respected even by authoritarian kings and their ministers, Germany under Nazism has particularly shocked her friends by a method of cultural control which consists in a thoroughgoing censorship of teaching and research in higher institutions of learning. This method of cultural control is interesting not in itself, but in the philosophy that underlies it. Strict as it is, the National Socialist control of teaching and research is not much different from that exercised by the Fascist government of Italy, or the imperial government of Japan; and it certainly is but child's play in comparison with the practices of the Bolshevist dictators

[1] Cf. Jockers, E., *Die Deutschen, Ihr Werden und Wesen,* Richmond Johnson Publishing Co., 1929.

of Russia, the Stalin "Constitution" notwithstanding. What is instructive, from the viewpoint of a student of national psychology and leadership, in the cultural control under consideration is the totalitarian *Leitmotiv,* the justification of the abolition of academic freedom.

The *Leitmotiv* is provided, again, by Dr. Alfred Rosenberg, the principal interpreter of the ideas of the Führer. In the *Völkisher Beobachter* of which Dr. Rosenberg is the editor, he has repeatedly stressed the idea that "every great culture is identified with a philosophy of life which gives man the power to mold the world"; that "a powerful political formation is the expression of a new life-feeling." His *Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts* condemns that same freedom of research and teaching which made possible books written by scholars and philosophers to whom Hitler and Rosenberg and other high National Socialist leaders owe directly, or indirectly by opposition and disagreement, many of their ideas and much of their very phraseology.

Dr. Rosenberg denies the existence of any purely objective science, accusing those who disagree with him of "pseudo-scientific obscurantism." In an elaboration of this thesis, he lists various preconceptions such as ideas, theories, and hypotheses which enter into scientific judgments and conclusions. He asserts that the racial characteristics of the scientist determine these preconceptions as they do spiritual values—the soul and race having "their own peculiar search-attitude" with which to view their environment. He further declares that real artistic and scientific creation always grows out of a single racial heritage and is only fully understood by the members of that race, having no meaning for those of other races. Conveniently forgetting the scientific contributions of the races more ancient than the German or the "Nordic-Greek," the

author of the *Mythus* proceeds to present his claim that all science, in the modern sense of the word, has resulted from "German creative power." All scientific thought and search for the laws underlying natural phenomena he ascribes to the "Nordic-Western" civilization, originated, he believes, by the "Nordic-Greeks" and splendidly continued by the Germans, beginning with the scientific work of "pious Nordic monks" such as Roger Bacon and Scotus Erigena. These men "attributed to the witness of the eye more weight than to the Syrian sheepskins, yellow with age," and thus contributed the basis for later research which resulted from a unique "outlook on life" and "spirit of search" rather than from "methodical technicalities." [1]

The Führer's and Dr. Rosenberg's totalitarian ideas on art, in particular, have been expanded by Professor Paul Schultze-Naumburg, Director of the Art School at Weimar, the author of *Die Kunst der Deutschen, Die Kunst und die Rasse,* and of the much-discussed paper, "Der Kampf um die Kunst." Dr. Schultze-Naumburg maintains that aesthetic content is predetermined by the racial peculiarities of the artist and his public. Each race, Dr. Schultze-Naumburg argues, has its own aesthetic objectives and its characteristic aesthetic ideal. The aesthetic feeling of an individual is dependent upon his racial roots, his racial *Weltanschauung.* The voice of the race in an individual is never silent; therefore, the term "Nordic" is not a geographical but a biological concept. Whoever has not the Nordic aesthetic feeling is not German. The fact that a given painter has a preference for a certain type of images is but an irrepressible voice of the race underlying his personality. Futurist and cubist works are always the sign of racial disintegration which expresses itself in fondness for picturing

[1] Rosenberg, A., *op. cit.,* SS. 116 ff.

corporal deformities; the expressionist movement in art is the product of decadence, and unless it is stopped, the humanity of the future will indeed mirror the expressionist pictures of today. The National Socialist policies relative to art are, concludes Dr. Schultze-Naumburg, inspired by the desire to strengthen the popular affection for the German race and blood. In particular, he recommends that definite tendencies in the theater, as a method of fighting for the racial outlook upon life among the members of the Third Reich, be accorded an unconditioned realization.[1] The theater, music, and literature were "purged" immediately after the National Socialist advent to power. By the fall of 1937 the turn of pictorial and plastic arts came. A vigorous campaign against all that the Nazi general staff for cultural controls considered diseased anti-German tendencies of cubism, futurism, expressionism, and dadaism in art was undertaken under the personal supervision of General Hermann Goering and Dr. Bernhard Rust; proscribed paintings and sculptures were ordered removed from public art galleries.

The first Minister for Science, Art, and Public Instruction of the Third Reich, Dr. Bernhard Rust, summarized his multiple ordinances and speeches condemning the traditional principle of academic freedom in the address delivered on the occasion of the five-hundredth anniversary of the foundation of Heidelberg University. With characteristic totalitarian-Dionysian point of view Dr. Rust argued, as reported in a wireless to the New York *Times:*

> "The Minister warmly defended National Socialist ideas of science and undertook to prove they did not interfere with 'true objectivity,' at the same time asserting su-

[1] Cf. *Zwischenspiel Hitler, cit.,* SS. 255 f.

premacy of the Nazi *Weltanschauung* and declaring that science which is not in accord with it is not objective. He said:

" 'Hidden from the eyes of strangers a change has taken place in the institutions of higher education since the Nazi party came to power. This change has resulted from the fertile influence of the new *Weltanschauung* (Nazism) and racial realities. At first, however, these efforts of science to enrich itself from the stream of the new *Weltanschauung* attracted less attention than certain political measures taken by the State, which were made necessary by the Nazi revolution.'

"The Minister then took up the charges that the present regime is making science the handmaiden of its political program. He continued:

" 'The Nazi State does not need to defend its measures. It derives them from the fundamental right of a nation to form its own character. The charge of enmity to science is true of the National Socialist regime if the complete absence of preconceptions and predispositions, unrestrained objectivity, are to be taken as characteristics of science.

" 'We dispute such an idea of science, however. All great scientific systems have been supported by faith in the meaning of the universe and the fate of human beings. In setting ourselves free from the false idea of objectivity we achieve at the same time a concept of true objectivity as a characteristic of all knowledge.

" 'We refer here to our fundamental starting point in preconception.'

"In familiar philosophical terms the Minister appeared to be arguing for the deductive rather than the inductive

scientific method, with the Nazi concepts of race, blood, and the like in the position of ultimate and indispensable principles.

"Referring to professors of the political and social sciences the Minister stated:

" 'We do not demand of the scholar that he praise the creations of the Nazi State. Nor do we regard it as his duty to give political actions his consecration afterward. We reject decreed science, but we also refuse to tolerate a political professor.

" 'It is thereby clear that National Socialism does not attack true scientific objectivity as we have defined it, but rather sees in it the prime necessity of its independent existence.

" 'The old idea of science based on the sovereign right of abstract intellectual activity has gone forever. The new science is entirely different from the idea of knowledge that found its value in an unchecked effort to reach the truth.

" 'The true freedom of science is to be an organ of a nation's living strength and of its historic fate and to present this in obedience to the law of truth.' "[1]

Whether in art or science, there is, to the Dionysian, an irreconcilable opposition, depicted by Ludwig Klages in his major work entitled *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele,* between the Intellect and Life, between the λόγος and βίος. The Dionysian vouches his fealty to the latter mystic entity. To him, there is just one living substance in the German peo-

[1] *See* also "Das nationalsozialistische Deutschland und die Wissenschaft: Heidelberg Reden von Reichsminister Rust und Prof. Ernst Krieck," *Schriften des Reichsinstitutes für Geschichte des neuen Deutschlands,* Hamburg, Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1936.

ple; it cannot be rationally analyzed but can be grasped by a seer. The Führer is one; all good Germans must therefore unite around him and under his command, in order to realize the high destiny of Germanism. Intellectuals of the old school, that is intellectuals pure and simple, are "separatists," and therefore must be removed from positions of leadership; if needed for technical expert service in various institutions and enterprises, their activities must be carefully controlled and watched, while the new generation of experts and leaders will be rising from among the Hitler Youth and alumni of the special National Socialist schools for the future leaders.[1]

Even more than its control of culture, the Third Reich's biological preoccupations and control reveal the Dionysian "totalitarianism" and can be explained by it. It is the totalitarian fear of inner split, of baffling manifoldness, the desire for worldly oneness that are the deep-rooted motives for the Third Reich's laws designed to protect the "racial purity" and "biological soundness" of the German people. In substance, these laws prohibit marriages between German citizens and non-Aryans, and they exclude from all forms of national leadership and public service, in fact, from full-fledged German citizenship, non-Aryans, even though German subjects by birth.

Neither the economic factor, the increase of occupations for the Aryan Germans through the removal and exclusion of non-Aryans; nor the political factor, fear of alien Marxists; nor discourses and disquisitions of racialist scholars can fully account for the volume and acuteness of the racialist movement in Germany.

Like most other nations, ancient and modern, the German

[1] Cf. Harcourt, R. I., "La jeunesse Hitlérienne," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1er décembre 1933.

public has been several times introduced to learned theories on the subject of the racial superiority of pure Germans and to erudite expositions of a chosen people and its mission. In 1779, Count Ewald Hertzberg, a Prussian statesman under Frederick the Great, published a memorandum entitled, "A Dissertation Explaining the Causes of the Superiority of the Germans over the Romans." In the first decade of the nineteenth century, Fichte propounded the doctrine of the *Urvolk* character and qualities of the German people. Around the middle of the century, German racialists, Richard Wagner[1] among others, took renewed enthusiasm from the racial doctrine of Count Joseph-Arthur Gobineau, a French diplomat and man of letters, the author of *Ottar Jarl* (the title being derived from the name of Gobineau's supposed ancestor, the famous Norwegian pirate, himself supposedly a descendant of Odin) and of the *Treatise on the Inequality of Human Races.* The German racialists overlooked, self-indulgently, the fact that the *homo linnaeus,* whose racial superiority Gobineau glorified, was Norwegian and Norman, and that Gobineau's verdict went, in a sense, against the Germans, whom he declared many times mixed in blood.[2]

At the turn of the last decade of the nineteenth century, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Wagner's son-in-law, the impetuous and eloquent champion of racial integrity and prophet of the glories of the pure German race,[3] contributed to the revival of racialism by the publication of his work, *The*

[1] Wagner's political and philosophical writings, lowly rated by Nietzsche, have been a *vade mecum* of the Führer.

[2] Gobineau, J. A., *Histoire d'Ottar Jarl, Pirate Norwégien,* Paris, Didier, 1879; *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines,* Paris, Firmin-Didot, 1884, 2 vols.

[3] Chamberlain, H. S., *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century,* New York, Dodd, Mead & Co., 1912, esp. Sixth Chapter: "The Entrance of the Germanic People into the History of the World," pp. 494-578.

Foundations of the Nineteenth Century. Hitler's racial doctrine was directly inspired by Chamberlain, who received and blessed Hitler at Beyreuth a few years before his death (d. 1927).

Ludwig Woltmann published during the first decade of the present century several works [1] in which he maintained that the most outstanding among famous Italians and Frenchmen were of blond, dolichocephalic Germanic descent: for example, Michelangelo Buonarroti was in reality a Bohnrodt; Leonardo da Vinci's ancestral Germanic last name was Winke or Vincke; Raphaël Santi was a Sandt; Botticelli, a Bott or Bottke, or Bodeck; Garibaldi, a Garipalt; Mazzini, a Matz; Cavour, a Benz; Molière, the pen name for Poquelin, was a Böcklin—that, in general, the Renaissance was not at all a revival of ancient arts and sciences, but a new creation issuing from the genius of the German race.

Such disquisitions were, however, above the head of the average member of the German middle and especially the lower middle class—the backbone of the National Socialist regime. Besides, such dissertations, written and oral, on the subject of the long-headed pure Nordics, when addressed to the predominantly round-headed burghers, farmers and factory workers would be blatantly tactless. No, the real ensnaring catch of the racialist doctrine was provided by the Dionysian, mystic, and totalitarian talks on the general subject of the regenerating and all-pervading power of the good German blood and on the impossibility of national unity, except on the basis of the oneness of the blood. The National Socialist pronun-

[1] Woltmann, L., *Politische Anthropologie,* Leipzig, Türingische Verlagsanstalt, 1903; *Die Germanen und die Renaissance in Italien,* Leipzig, Türingische Verlagsanstalt, 1905; *Die Germanen in Frankreich,* Jena, E. Diedrichs, 1907. Cf. Roques, P., "L'Enseignement de l'histoire dans les lycées hitlériens," *Revue Universitaire,* janvier, 1935.

ciamentos on the racial problem which seem to have gripped the masses of the Germans gravitate around the motives like those instanced in Dr. Alfred Rosenberg's interpretations of the thought of Meister Eckhart, the celebrated German mystic of the thirteenth century, on the power of the blood:

> "In a sermon (on Cor. 1, 2) Meister Eckhart makes distinction between blood and flesh. By blood he understands, together with St. John, he thinks, all that is, in a man, not subject to his will; in other words, the counterpart of the soul, which functions in the subconscious. In another sermon (on Math. 10, 28) Eckhart says: 'The noblest that is in man is the blood, when it is of the right kind; but blood is also the worst that men can have, when it is of the kind that drives them into evil.' "[1]

G. Eschenhagen, one of the messengers of the Nazi regime, has also well reflected the "selling" racialist style in the following Dionysian motto:

> "The blood's spirit is the judge;
> His time will come.
> Let us prepare path for'm—
> The blood and time!
> In active calm
> The Reich will ripen
> In people's bosom."[2]

The single underlying truth of the matter is, however, that the totalitarian cannot see that a group of people made of varying racial stock can be a solidly united nation, commanding

[1] *Op. cit.*, S. 243.

[2] Eschenhagen, G., *Entscheidung: Bekenntnis eines jungen Deutschen*, Berlin-Stiglitz, Heinrich Wilhelm Hendriock Verlag, 1931 ("Prologue").

at an hour of trial the particular gifts possessed by the nationalities which entered into the composition of a compound nation.

No other form of the National Socialist control of the life of the German nation, perhaps, reveals more fully the Dionysian "totalitarianism" of the present-day leadership in Germany than the unfriendly attitude of the regime toward the Christian religion.

Whether camouflaged and gloved or frank and brutal, the war of the regime on Christianity alienates or at least profoundly disturbs not a few German men and women otherwise sympathetic to the regime. Why should the governing group antagonize those people, without really making gains to compensate the regime for what it loses through animosity toward Christianity? Why do the National Socialist leaders hate Christianity, and harass the Christian organizations and thus place themselves in this regard next to the Communists?

Fundamentally, two motives underlie the anti-Christian policies of the National Socialist regime. The minor one is that which the National Socialist regime has in common with any other political dictatorship; it is the fear that any organization, of however a discreet non-political character it may be, if left independent from and uncontrolled by the dictator may become a rallying place for the opposition, ever latent under a dictatorship. It was exactly this motive, that prompted Mussolini irreverently to proceed with ungentle police measures against the Catholic Youth organizations in Italy; this policy of the Duce had led to considerable friction between the Fascist Government and the Holy See which was settled, in the Lateran Treaty of 1929, not altogether to the satisfaction of the Church. The Führer, however, even though indirectly, by countenancing various anti-Christian activities and meas-

ures practiced by his lieutenants, went in his religious policies far beyond the measures of any modern dictatorship, except the communistic Soviet Government. A further explanation of this particular aspect of the National Socialist regime must be sought. It is to be found in its "totalitarianism," which is the major motive underlying the anti-Christian Nazi policies. The totalitarian has abhorrence, natural to him, of anything but one-hundred-per-cent *Gleichschaltung*—the total adherence to the regime.

The leading National Socialists find two basic faults with Christianity. First, it is of non-Germanic, even non-Nordic-Greek origin. Second, Christianity, with its gospel of love and brotherhood, is the purest form of spiritual internationalism the world has known and is, of course, incompatible with militant one-hundred-per-cent totalitarian supernationalism. As it was stated by Dr. Robert Ley, Director of the Labor Front, "The party claims the totality of the soul of the German people. It can and will not suffer that another party or point of view dominate in Germany. We believe that the German people can become eternal only through National Socialism." [1] To these totalitarian claims of the National Socialist State, the voice of Christian conscience can have only one answer, such as was made by the confessional synod of the German Evangelical Church, comprising the Lutheran and the Reformed bodies: "The heresy is refuted that the State over and above its own special task should and can become the single and total regulator of human life and thus also fulfill the vocation of the church." [2]

The National Socialist regime has conducted its attack on Christianity along two principal lines, which are impressively reviewed and refuted by Christian leaders in four important

[1] The New York *Times*, August 2, 1936. [2] *Ibid.*

documents, particularly: the pastoral letter of German Catholic Bishops issued in January, 1936, the memorial addressed to Hitler by Evangelical leaders in July, 1936, the pastoral letter of the Reich Conference of Catholic Bishops which met at Fulda in August, 1936, and the encyclical, *Mit brennender Sorge,* of Palm Sunday, 1937.

One line of the Nazi attack on Christianity is characterized by measures, such as the appointment to the newly created office of Protestant Reich Bishop of Dr. Ludwig Mueller, an army chaplain and old friend of the Führer, a clergyman in whom his National Socialist enthusiasms seem to have left little room for true Christian thought and sentiment; also by the appointment of Dr. Hans Kerrl as Minister for Church Affairs, who, defining his conception of his office, declared not without a suggestive ambiguity: "The church that Germany wants is not a State church, but an inwardly free, independent church. Guided by the new conceptions, it would, nevertheless, quite voluntarily march with the State in which it must work and live. If order is to be established in the land, only one authority can exist." [1]

This line of attack on Christianity has as its goal the so-called Germanization of the Christian faith. The tactics of this particular strategy vary. Christ is presented in His human guise as descendent from a stray Nordic tribe, and in His divine guise as a Nietzschean, militant Christ, the founder of "positive Christianity," somewhat after the fashion of *"sans-culotte* Jesus," or the "most radical Jacobin of Judea," preached by the Hebertists during the Terror period of the French Revolution. Psalms are rewritten; Germans are substituted for Israel in the psalms glorifying the virtues of the chosen people and prophe-

[1] The New York *Times Magazine,* March 1, 1936.

sying its ascendancy. Clergymen, Catholic or Protestant, are fined and jailed for obeying the word of God and not that of the Nazi ordinances.

Another line of the Nazi attack on Christianity consists in promoting the ancient German pagan religion and is conducted in person by no lesser functionaries than the "Philosophic Dictator" of the Third Reich, Dr. Alfred Rosenberg, and the Minister for Propaganda, Dr. Goebbels, and their immediate subordinates.[1] This line of attack is inspired by the complete rejection of Christianity as a foreign "Judopaulinian doctrine," "an un-German admixture of inferiority and Jewish philosophy." The goal of this line of the Nazi anti-Christian strategy is to replace Christianity with resuscitated ancient German pagan religion, in order to achieve "one people, one spirit, one will, one energy." As a means to this end, Wotan, the old German god, is declared the embodiment of the Nordic spirit and the divine force that dwells in all pure Germans.

According to the already mentioned memorandum of protest addressed to Hitler by evangelical leaders, the National Socialist youth are taught—through the medium of the monopolistic State educational system—to "regard with contempt or derision young people who, in the language of their teachers, still run to their ridiculous Evangelical or Catholic clubs, to give themselves up to eminently superfluous religious reveries."

[1] The position of the Führer on the problem of the totalization, or rather, paganization of religion, is full of ambiguities. While permitting his lieutenants to war on Christianity, he does not take an open stand against it; occasionally, he invokes the name of God. He climaxed the campaign preceding the referendum, when the proverbial Nazi ninety per cent of voters approved the re-militarization of the Rhine Zone in March, 1936, with "the bells of 150,000 churches throughout Germany echoing those of the famous Cologne cathedral; all Germans were asked, at a radio signal, to lift their voices in the hymn, 'O Lord, make us free.'" Cf. Hitler's Vienna speeches after the annexation of Austria in 1938.

To facilitate its anti-Christian labors, the neo-pagan Nazi Government never really allows the churches publicity to refute charges against them. All this work of "de-Christianization on the widest scale" is accompanied with a melodic chanting, still more or less shyly muffled, which consists in intermingling praises to Hitler with hints at the divinity of his person. The Führer, protests the memorandum, "is often revered in a form that is due to God alone." "Human arrogance is rising up against God," is the fearless comment of the authors of the memorandum. Hitler is reminded, further, of the fact that he has been vested by his fanatical lieutenants "with the dignity of national priest." Indeed, Hitler supplants God in the fervent National Socialists' death notices; in place of the customary phrase, "died with belief in God," is used the formula, "died with belief in Adolf Hitler," or "died with belief in his Führer." For Hindenburg, buried, contrary to his express will, with an admixture of semi-pagan ceremonies of torch procession and martial music, the new head of the Third Reich wished not heaven but only Valhalla; the closing words of Hitler's funeral oration were: "Departed General! Enter now into Valhalla!" [1]

To seize more clearly the totalitarian and revoltingly absurd nature of the various excesses of the Nazi religious policies, it may be useful to recall some of the more important modern forerunners of the National Socialist neo-paganism.

Wagner, the assiduous reader of Gobineau and one of the strongest influences that Hitler has experienced, cultivated the race spirit by reviving, through his operas, the German mythology; he sought to place it on a pedestal with almost pure pagan fervor. Chamberlain, another guiding light to the Führer, attacked the Catholic Church in his doctrine of Teu-

[1] Associated Press, Berlin, August 15, 1934.

tonic Christianity.[1] During the World War a tendency existed, though perhaps only on a small scale, to infuse the Christian faith with the peculiar emotional appeal of German mythology. Since the war, Ludendorff has exhibited in his biweekly magazine, *Volkswacht,* strong neo-pagan leanings. In the issue published on the eve of his seventieth birthday, Ludendorff reiterated his neo-pagan position:

> "I demand the unity of our people on the basis of the knowledge of our race, both from the bodily (biological) and spiritual point of view such as my wife gave us. I demand the unity of our people as regards law, culture, and economic life.
>
> "Such unity cannot be achieved if international doctrines of any kind, not only economic but also religious, hold sway among our people. Our people must turn away from foreign doctrines and Christianity. May the German people listen to me. May the entire people at least listen to me this one time on my seventieth birthday.
>
> "It is not hatred of Christianity; it is not hatred of supernational powers that are the fountain source of my struggle against Christian teachings and against the powers of their tools. The reason for my struggle lies in my love for the German people and for its defense force. Only because of this love have I become the enemy of Christian teachings and supernational powers."

However illustrious, in their particular calling, may be the forerunners of the Nazi anti-Christian political leaders, nothing changes the fact that in its religious totalitarian control the regime has touched the height of folly, even when its policies

[1] *Op. cit.,* Vol. I, pp. 320 ff., esp. p. 327.

are considered strictly from the point of view of the Nazi domestic and international interests. Their religious policies are a Pyrrhic victory. The attraction of an old cross erected by sincere piety in the Black Forest will no doubt survive the fascination of the neo-Dionysian nightly dances around the sacred fire, staged on those same hills by neo-pagan youths in bathing suits. The *Heiland*—the Savior—will not be superseded by Hitler; not any more than "Ave Maria" and "Silent Night, Holy Night" will be replaced by Nazi songs. As the pastoral letter of Catholic Bishops, already mentioned, justly notes, Germany first assumed its place as a leading nation when Christianity freed it from pagan darkness. Prior to that time the Germans had been on a level with the Huns. The future historian will, therefore, in all probability find the adoption of Christianity by Chlodwig in the year 496 a far greater act of statesmanship than the repudiation of Christianity by the Hitlerian Third Reich. The war on the Christian Churches conducted by the Nazi party in Germany and coupled with their pagan antagonism toward Christianity in other lands is certainly not an act of statesmanship; because Christianity, however little of it remains in the world, is the only force that can and would stand in the way of the rampant savagery which pagan super-nationalism would let loose in another world war and from which the Germans would suffer like the other belligerents. The universal history of Christianity is not alone in supporting this conclusion. German national history itself contains an additional support when it reveals that side by side with the earth-bound "totalitarianism" there has always resided in the German mind the longing for the infinite, even though this longing is at times submerged by "totalitarianism."

SOME MANIFESTATIONS OF GERMAN "INFINITISM"

There is truth in Napoleon's saying that force is never laughable. This applies to the Hitlerian Third Reich, even though the Nazi totalitarian controls of the life of the German nation furnish more than one example of the most bizarre exaggeration. For example, Julius Streicher's declaration of war on the alien "saffron-head old sweetheart, the lemon," and his demand that it should cede place to the native rhubarb, clamored: "Only the products of our native soil can be used to create German blood. Through them alone can delicate spiritual aspirations be communicated to the blood, and through it to the body and soul. . . . Our lemons then shall be atoned with German rhubarb." [1] On the whole, totalitarian controls bring, at least temporarily, strength to a totalitarian nation, and also increase the element of international danger implied in such super-nationalism, when it is espoused by a nation of Germany's geographical position, numerical strength, and industrial and military genius.

The opposition of the outside world to such totalitarian super-nationalism will perhaps only fan it up to new heights of fervor and fury. The really effective check, however remote, of the Third Reich's "totalitarianism," is provided by the dualism of the German mind itself; by the presence in it side by side with mundane "totalitarianism," of the other-worldly longing for the infinite. The *Nibelungenlied,* which gives Siegfried, the scion of Wotan, Christian burial, and the second *Faust,* in which the paganized doctor's soul is redeemed by angels, have truthfully reflected a profound feature of the German national psychology and a fundamental fact in the

[1] Boston *Evening Transcript,* August 6, 1935.

history of the Germans. On the other hand, it may happen that the effective check in question will act too late to save Germany's neighbors at least.

The Germans appeared on the stage of western civilization as hordes animated with totalitarian impetus, and as bands of warriors overrunning the world, particularly the Roman Empire, during the fourth and fifth centuries, in a devastating onslaught. That tremendous *Drang nach Westen* was the irresistible drive for the conquest of the west down to the Pillars of Hercules and the garden of the Hesperides, located by mythology in the present-day Spain. Their native *Sehnsucht* for the infinite made them, however, accessible to the gospel of Christ; in the sixth to the ninth centuries "infinitism" prevailed among the Germans. They gave many splendid manifestations of Christian otherworldliness; they were then quiescent, politically and militarily—that is, in comparison with the previous and subsequent epochs when their "totalitarianism" vehemently superseded their universalism and otherworldliness born of the longing for the infinite.

The tenth to the thirteenth centuries witnessed a recrudescence of "totalitarianism" at the expense of "infinitism"; these centuries were characterized in German history by the *Drang nach Süden* and the *Drang nach Osten,* the drives for the conquest of the south, particularly of Italy, and of the present-day German east, then western Slavonic lands on the Baltic Sea and west of the Vistula. The First Realm (*das erste Reich*), or the Holy Roman Empire of the Germanic Nation of Otto I through Konrad IV Hohenstaufen (962-1254), arose, flourished, and declined during this second totalitarian epoch of German History.[1] Next, "infinitism" again came into ascend-

[1] Its culminating point, "the wild ferment," as H. S. Chamberlain described it, is sometimes placed between 1200 and 1250. Cf. Chamberlain, H. S., *The*

ancy among the Germans; the second epoch characterized by its rise, flourishing, and decline extended through the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries. It is to the end of this second epoch of "infinitism" that the political characterization of the Germans made by Sir William Hamilton in his *Discussions* and quoted by Madame de Staël applies most fittingly:

> ". . . The Germans have shown always the weakest sentiment of nationality. Descended from the same ancestors, speaking a common language, unconquered by a foreign enemy, and once the subjects of a general government, they are the only people in Europe who have passively allowed their national unity to be broken down, and submitted like cattle, to be parceled and reparceled into flocks, as suited to the convenience of their shepherds. . . . The Germans of our days were not a nation. . . . The Germans of our days did not have what is called character." [1]

The zenith of the second epoch of "infinitism" was reached in the sixteenth-seventeenth century in the sacrifices borne by the Germans in the religious wars of the period.[2] Those

Foundations of the Nineteenth Century, cit., Vol. I, p. lxv: "The awakening of the Teutonic peoples to the consciousness of the all-important vocation as the founders of a complete new civilization and culture forms this turning point; the year 1200 can be designated the central moment of this awakening." Vol. II, p. 4: "I felt, however, that this wild ferment continued long after the year 1200."

[1] Mme. the Baroness de Staël-Holstein, *Germany*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1887, Vol. I, p. 33.

[2] Cf. the following analysis of the Protestant Reformation as a Christian Renaissance found in Hippolyte Taine's *History of English Literature*, Vol. II, Ch. V: "Imagine—if you may—the effect which the shameless paganism of the Italian Renaissance had upon such a mind, so loyal, so Christian. The beauty of art, the charm of a refined and sensuous existence, had taken no hold upon him [Luther]; he judged morals, morals alone, and he judged them with his conscience only. He regarded this southern civilization with the eyes of a man from the north, and understood its vices only. Like other

events were characteristically a revolt of the soul, and an expression of the desire for peace of conscience in distinction from the contemporary and subsequent political movements in other countries, which were, like the French Revolution, revolts of logic and of the stomach, motivated by the desire for economic and political comfort. The German conflicts of faith, at times armed conflicts between the Protestants and the Catholics, were an unmistakable, though sad, expression of boundless devotion to the infinite, of ardent longing for the eternal religious truth and its triumph. The end of this epoch witnessed the life and work of Leibnitz (d. 1716), the great philosopher of "infinitism."

The political and military weakness of Germany concomitant to the ascendancy of "infinitism" was apparently compensated, in so far as the higher interests of the German people were concerned, by the philosophical, artistic, and scientific prestige of Germany in the world at large, which doubtless facilitated the subsequent political, economic, and military rise of Germany. To borrow again from Madame de Staël:

> "This division of Germany, fatal to her political force, was nevertheless very favorable to all the efforts of genius and imagination. In matters of literary and metaphysical opinion, there was a sort of gentle anarchy, which allowed to every man the complete development of his own individual manner of perception." [1]

The absence of political and military aggressiveness, in fact the passivity and the submissiveness of the Germans even in the

Germanic visitors to Italy of that time, he was horrified at this voluptuous life, void of moral principles, given up to passion, caring for the present, destitute of belief in the infinite, with no other worship than that of visible beauty, no other object than the search after pleasure."

[1] *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 32.

face of the diplomatic and military high-handedness of Richelieu and Louis XIV, marked the end of the second epoch of "infinitism."

Then from the middle of the eighteenth century "totalitarianism" begins its second revival and its third epoch, under the leadership of Prussia. This new totalitarian movement of German impetus in worldly matters was, to be sure, goaded and therefore helped by the imperialism of Richelieu, Louis XIV, and Napoleon. Frederick the Great, the forerunner of the Second Bismarckian Reich, emulated Richelieu and Louis XIV and their generals, and attempted through a confederation the national reunification of at least a part of the Germans scattered among innumerable principalities. Bismarck, the founder of the Second Realm (*das zweite Reich*), 1871-1918, emulated Richelieu, Louis XIV, and also Napoleon I. At least in his own mind and in that of many of his fellow-countrymen, he was the avenger of the humiliations inflicted on the Germans by past French imperialistic policies. The Hitlerian Third Realm is perhaps the culminating period of the second revival or third epoch of "totalitarianism."

At the beginning of its second political and military revival "totalitarianism" was assisted, both directly and indirectly, by romanticist poets and philosophers, men like Klopstock, Arndt, Schenkendorff, Fichte, Hegel; but all of them were more moderate than the neo-romantic leading Nazi poets and philosophers. Hegel, though a protagonist of the totalitarian State and a believer in the Germans as the chosen race, based his claim to the international superiority of the Germans on their "pure interiority," which, he stressed, lent them the greatest affinity to the Christian spirit.[1] The "totalitarianism" of the

[1] Cf. Bréhier, E., *Histoire de philosophie,* Paris, Félix Alcan, 1926-32, t. 2(3), p. 776.

Storm-and-Stress period was, furthermore, counteracted by the "infinitism" and universalism of the greatest of the romanticists, the twin stars Goethe and Schiller. They both passed through a comparatively brief and mild period of Dionysian anti-intellectualism and totalitarian nationalism. During that phase of his life Goethe spoke contemptuously of the century of enlightenment as the ink-smearing century. Schiller similarly condemned literature. Goethe also deplored that no German could even buckle his shoe without having been instructed by foreigners; and Schiller in his ballads exulted in the primeval noble qualities of the German people.

Soon, however, the two greatest of the romanticists soared to the poetical search of the super-national, infinite truth and beauty, revealed in nature and religion as well as in triumphs and tribulations of mankind; the cosmopolitan choice of subjects for their great creations reflects this evolution from "totalitarianism" to "infinitism," or at least to the classical universalism or cosmopolitanism: for example, *Don Carlos, The Maid of Orléans, Maria Stuart, Iphigenie, Demetrius, Fiesco, Tasso.* Goethe even went so far as to say that "the classical is health, the romantic is disease."[1] Wagner's fundamental theme, despite his racialistic totalitarian pagan moods, was an otherworldly one—the salvation of the soul.

It is needless to point out that this evolution of the greatest of the romanticists brought to Germany conquests by the Muses greater than Mars perhaps can ever achieve; Napoleon in an outburst of spontaneity reflected this new hold of the German genius on mankind when he said of Goethe: "He is a Man, capital M."[2]

[1] "Sprüche in Prosa," *Sämmtliche Werke,* Stuttgart und Tübingen, Gotta'scher Verlag, 1850, B. III, S. 234.

[2] Valéry, P., *Oeuvres,* Paris, Editions de la N.R.F., t. 5, p. 109.

Like the poets of genius, the outstanding German philosophers and scholars of that milder period of the still continuing third epoch of "totalitarianism," whose zenith we are now witnessing probably, felt or clearly understood a simple but far-reaching truth which seems to escape the attention of the Nazi leaders, overcome as they are by their own totalitarian impetus. That simple truth is this: The nation which can muster high achievements inspired by disinterested search for eternal truths, and which can show genuine sympathetic understanding of various other nations and races, has the highest chance for international leadership, not only spiritual but also economic and political leadership. Consider the cosmopolitan interests of German scholars, who have produced some of the best existing studies on men of genius in other lands, also great dictionaries, guides, and glossaries on the philosophy and religions of other nations and races. Consider also the spirit which animated the work of German universities and which was aptly described by Professor Eduard Spranger as follows:

> "The German university of the nineteenth century is the child of the epoch characterized by the luxuriant blending of philosophic idealism, political liberalism, aesthetic humanism, and historic consciousness. The being of the university was rooted in the conviction that true science is personal productive grip on eternal ideas and that by reason and means of an incorruptible promotion of the spirit, science is justified and obliged to shape itself autonomously, in accordance with its fundamental characteristics." [1]

[1] "Das Wesen der deutschen Universität," in *Das akademische Deutschland*, Berlin, C. A. Weller Verlag, 1930, B. III ("Die deutschen Hochschulen in ihrer Beziehungen zur Gegenwartskultur"), S. 3.

While there prevailed such a philosophy of higher education and scientific research, inspired in the last analysis with the devotion to the infinite, German philosophers, artists, and scholars filled the world with admiration and respect for the German nation. At times, foreigners were amused because they did not understand that the apparently abstruse cobwebs of thought, spun by German philosophers, and the endless stringing up of details, dug out by the scholars, were "the expression of an almost ruthless earnestness in the quest for the truth, the innermost truth, and the ultimate truth." [1]

From the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, and until the very advent of the Nazi regime, free, fruitful German philosophy, science, and art were universally highly regarded. To repeat, this freedom of intellect was an achievement, often indirect, of German "infinitism." It proved to be an incomparable advertising agent for Germany and a powerful factor which counteracted, to the benefit of Germany, in neutral countries at least, the painful impression produced by acts of wanton military highhandedness and unnecessary brutality on the part of the Second Reich, particularly in the World War.

[1] Wingfield-Stratford, E., *op. cit.*, p. 1069.

Note: Hegel gives a very enlightening explanation of the German fondness for hair-splitting detail in philosophizing and scientific research: "We are known as deep but often obscure thinkers. The lack of clarity comes from our desire to grasp the innermost substance of things and their necessary relationship. This is the reason why in scientific research we proceed extremely systematically. . . . In general, our mind is more inward-set than that of any other nation. We by preference live in the innermost of thought and sentiment. In this calm hermitage of the spirit we occupy ourselves with a careful determination of principles of an action before we undertake the action. This is why we slowly go to an act and remain undecided at times when a speedy action is necessary, and despite our earnest desire to handle a situation efficiently, we often fall short of success. The French saying, the wish for the better kills the good (*le meilleur tue le bien*), applies to us." ("Philosophie des Geistes," *Werke*, Siebenter Band, Berlin, 1845, Verlag von Duncker und Humboldt, S. 80.)

The attack of the totalitarian National Socialist State upon the free play of the German "infinitism" in religion, philosophy, science, and art will in all probability turn out to be self-defeating in the end. It will probably be proved once more that spirit breathes where it wishes or it does not breathe. The building of all their policies, national and international, on the principle that, in the words of Herr F. Sieburg, "there are to be no more mere human beings in Germany, but only Germans," [1] is likely to be condemned by the frustration of some vital national interests of Germany herself. The day will probably come when German "infinitism" will reassert itself and reveal itself again an indomitable and indestructible human force. Then a new epoch of German history will begin.

[1] Sieburg, F., *op. cit.*, p. 13.

Chapter VII

UNITY THROUGH IMPETUS

"INFINITISM" IN THE SERVICE OF "TOTALITARIANISM"

At all times of German history there were, of course, Germans motivated primarily by otherworldly "infinitism" and Germans motivated primarily by earthly "totalitarianism"; the fundamental dualism of the German mind functions at all times. So it may be said that epochs of the German history receive their coloring from and are characterized by "totalitarianism" or "infinitism," respectively, because of the predominance of the one or the other motivating force in the majority of Germans during a given epoch. "Infinitism," however, is not eliminated during a totalitarian epoch and vice versa, but the weaker of the two forces is placed in the service of the predominant one. In other words, during an epoch characterized by "totalitarianism," "infinitism" is harnessed, by way of more or less ingenious sublimations, to the service of "totalitarianism," and conversely. This is the fundamental fact that must be borne in mind for the comprehension of the basic alternation of "totalitarianism" and "infinitism" in German history.

That alternation shows the tendency to run counter to the general trend, at a given time, in the history of the western world. As a result, the Germans have exercised more than

once in the past an epoch-making leadership in the western world; or at least the Germans more than once have set the pace in the western world even though they themselves, obeying the law of German historical contrasts or inner historical "dialectics" of their national mind, would next turn about and begin to move—and set the pace—in the opposite direction. Thus, for instance, during the ninth to the thirteenth centuries the Germans were motivated primarily by "totalitarianism" and were building the First Reich, or the Holy Roman Empire of the Germanic Nation, a kingdom very much of this world, into which the major part of central and southern Europe was to be absorbed; at that time the rest of Europe was very largely permeated by medieval otherworldliness. Next, by the time the other countries of western Europe, in particular France and England, their worldly saps fermenting under the influence of the paganistic Renaissance, were embarking in their turn on what may be called intra-European imperialism, the Germans were turning their hearts away from the Renaissance paganism, materialism, and imperialism; they were moving back toward the medieval otherworldliness. In due course, they were in the throes of the Protestant Reformation and the religious wars which were exploited by their neighbors for worldly ends—political imperialistic purposes.

At present, when the western world and the major part of the eastern are motivated primarily by materialistic hedonistic individualism, whether naked and bold or camouflaged and sly, and when materialism, with or without disguise, is the predominant motivating power which shapes the historical process in other lands, Germany is animated with a kind of heroic, puritanic enthusiasm, however misguided. Such appears to be one of the significant surprises generated by the

German dualism of "totalitarianism" and "infinitism," viewed in the historical perspective.

Now let us turn our attention to the workings of that still more significant fact of German history—the harnessing of the heaven-bound "infinitism" to the chariot of the earth-hungry "totalitarianism." This operation, which undoubtedly was performed in the past each time when a totalitarian epoch was approaching its climax, seems to be taking place now. The present totalitarian epoch, begun around the middle of the eighteenth century, seems to be approaching its climax in the Third Reich, whose avowed ambition is to surpass in power and glory the First Reich or the Holy Roman Empire of the Germanic Nation,[1] to say nothing of the Second or Bismarckian Reich. It is this particular fundamental feature of the history of the Germans that holds the major secret of that almost mysterious recent event—the rise of the National Socialist Third Reich.

To repeat, the totalitarian National Socialist regime has hurt, through its political extremism, both domestic and international, the international economic interests of Germany; it has arrested, at least temporarily, the country's return to the prewar economic expansion and prosperity. This the National Socialist regime has done with astonishingly little harm to itself in so far as its strength at home and Germany's position as a world power are concerned. In fact, if anything, the latter has profited, at least for the time being, from the Nazi impetus. National Socialist Germany has succeeded in defying the former Allied and Associated powers in a manner undreamt of by the preceding postwar administrations. There

[1] Cf. Brown, H., *"Drang nach Osten," The Nineteenth Century and After,* March, 1935, pp. 291-305.

was practically no exaggeration in the proud statement made by the Führer at the National Socialist annual convention in September, 1936, to the effect that "today the Reich is more firmly founded in its political leadership and military security than ever before." [1] This success cannot wholly be explained by the weakness of the other Great Powers of Europe; it is, rather, the "quotation" which the actual strength of Germany is receiving on the international diplomatic stock exchange—that most realistic research laboratory concerning the tangible and intangible elements of strength and weakness of nations. The present actual strength which Germany possesses, in spite of her economic difficulties, owes, in turn, much to the placing of "infinitism" in the service of "totalitarianism."

The predictions already mentioned of rapid disintegration of the National Socialist regime through economic difficulties have been belied by actual developments precisely because of the skillful exploitation of the element of "infinitism," or other-worldliness of the German mind by the present-day earth-bound totalitarian regime. To be sure, in his worldly hours the average German workman and the average middle-class man are irked by the regulations relative to the economy of fats, to the one-course dinner, and to the general low level of wages and income. In such hours the bourgeois grumble before reliable foreigners at the absurdities of the regime; and the workmen complain, "The Führer has given us bread and national pride—we want pork, too." Such confidences and complaints justify the skepticism expressed by some foreign observers, who say they do not understand how it happens that while the referendum statistics always show ninety per cent of the population solidly supporting the regime, and only ten per

[1] Wireless to the New York *Times* from Nuremberg, September 9, 1936.

cent opposed to it, wherever they turned they saw just those ten per cent and never a trace of the ninety.

Yet, in moments of significant manifestations of the national will, which endorse, if not prepare, the far-reaching decisions of the National Socialist Government, the otherworldly indifference to worldly comforts prevails. It has prevailed in the German woman's acquiescence in the return from the Weimar * equality and the liberties, educational and occupational as well as political, to the traditional *Kinder-und-Küche* place of the woman—the third "K," the *Kirche,* having been dropped by the Nazi regime. Hitler has never concealed, from the very beginning of his drive for power, his intention to restore the old Germanic hierarchy of the sexes, which meant, of course, the subordination of woman to man, best illustrated since by the National Socialist ordinances relative to the restrictions in admitting girls to higher institutions of learning. In spite of such antifeminine National Socialist policies, German women played an important role in voting the Nazi into power and in the subsequent consolidation of the regime.

The surrender of political and material comforts to the totalitarian State on the part of the majority of the German public of both sexes is indeed a series of quite free gifts, *freiwilligen Abgaben;* these are explicable by the fact not only that the majority of the Germans are now in the totalitarian mood, but also that the element of "infinitism" in them is skillfully harnessed to the promotion of totalitarian ends. A certain percentage of Germans, like the indomitable Christian leaders, are motivated primarily by "infinitism" even amidst the exultations of the present-day ascendancy of "totalitarianism." They refuse to compromise on their devotion to the Infinite. Similarly, a few untamable individualists and lovers of free-

* For the explanation of the term *see* pp. 374, 419.

dom will not be reconciled to the totalitarian regime either by bread, however plentiful, or by circuses, however thrilling. Such Germans are, however, in the minority and will remain in the minority until the next, or third, revival of "infinitism" when the next epoch of "infinitism" will have gathered momentum.

Viewed in the light of the historical alternation, or the inner historical German "dialectics" of "totalitarianism" and "infinitism," the advent of the National Socialists, the most totalitarian German rulers known to modern times, is not astonishing at all. It is simply the culminating drive toward the totalitarian goals, begun by Frederick the Great and the statesmen of the War of Liberation; *i.e.,* the war against the foreign-Napoleonic-imperialistic dictatorship. This drive and its goals were taken up and clarified by Bismarck, but later were bungled by William II and his advisers in the diplomatic and military errors of the period 1890-1918. All these previous modern totalitarian drives occurred under the leadership of the military aristocracy, very largely Prussian. The popular masses played for the most part the sad role of cannon fodder; therefore the drives did not attain to full strength. Ludendorff perhaps realized this when in the midst of the World War, which he expected to end in a German victory, he thought of the next and, he hoped, the last war that would make Germany the mistress of the world. The National Socialists, helped by the totalitarian spirit of the epoch, have persuaded the popular masses to adopt this supreme totalitarian goal which they inherited from their totalitarian predecessors in supreme power. Now they hope to achieve that goal through a mighty impetus of the nation, "unified biologically and psychologically" and devoting to the ultimate totalitarian purpose its total mental and physical resources. In the pithy words of Herr Moeller

van der Bruck, National Socialism is "the fighter for the final empire (*Streiter für das Endreich*)." [1]

What is the causal connection, then, between the advent of the Third Reich and the period immediately preceding? This period of German history, which may be called the Weimar, or Geneva, period (1919-1933), was characterized in domestic affairs by the adoption of the republican Weimar Constitution August 11, 1919, and by a confusion in parliamentary politics *à la française*. This period was marked, in diplomatic affairs, by the not unsuccessful flirtations with the League of Nations, in which Dr. Stresemann bagged for Germany a quite advanced evacuation of the Rhine Zone by the Allies, in exchange for what proved since just another scrap of paper, known as the Treaty of Locarno. This decade and one half was an incubation period for the next totalitarian drive, now conducted under the National Socialist leadership.

The political confusion during the Weimar period was caused partly by exhaustion from the World War, but also by the fact that the relay of standard bearers for a new totalitarian drive was taking place. The middle and the lower middle class were being girded to replace the military aristocracy in the new world Marathon for the *imperium mundi;* the totalitarian epoch begun with Frederick the Great entered into the climax phase. A lower middle-class fellow by the name of Adolf Hitler, appropriately endowed for the task, was to take the place at the helm vacated by the abdication of the Kaiser and the princes as a consequence of the loss of the war. The Germany of the Weimar Constitution and Geneva cooings of the dove of peace was, indeed, but a protective screen behind which the true Germany of the present epoch, the Germany

[1] *Op. cit.*, S. 320.

of Potsdam,* was taking a breathing spell, relaying its standard bearers, and preparing to make the next totalitarian drive; the one that we are witnessing, which is more truly totalitarian, because it comprises not the upper class alone, but the "total nation." This *interregnum* from 1919 to 1933, during which time a rapid political incubation of the middle and lower middle class and the harnessing of "infinitism" to the chariot of "totalitarianism" took place, has such historical significance and psychological interest as to justify a brief review of the principal electoral events in Germany from the November Revolution of 1918 until the assumption of power by the National Socialists in 1933.

As it is true in the case of any social revolution, the German November Revolution of 1918 (*der neunte November*) occurred because of the coincidence of the three factors whose combination has always produced, and in all probability will always produce, a social revolution. Those factors are dissatisfaction from below, dissatisfaction from above, and a significant national crisis in which these two currents of dissatisfaction meet.

As the war progressed, dissatisfaction from below, which is always present in some degree in every country, grew in Germany to alarming dimensions. As a result of ever-increasing economic distress consequent upon the blockade, the majority of the townspeople in Germany had already in the winter of

* It will be recalled that the Nazi Government chose for its inaugural meeting—"for laying the cornerstone of the New Reich" (*feierlicher Staatsakt der Begründung des neuen Reiches*)—March 21, 1933, the Garrison church (*Garnisonkirche*) at Potsdam, in which Frederick the Great was buried. Potsdam, a suburb of Berlin, long associated with the Hohenzollern monarchy, the preferred residence of Prussian kings and the home town of several distinguished Prussian regiments, is defined in Knaurs's *Konversations-Lexikon* (1936) as follows: "Symbolic designation of the spirit of Prussianism, which has particularly manifested itself in the person of Frederick the Great."

1915-1916 entered upon an era of famine, the symbols of which were turnips and bread lines. To borrow from Professor Arthur Rosenberg's *The Birth of the German Republic:*

> "Notwithstanding the increase in wages, especially in those of the munition workers, the large majority of wage-earners was unable to purchase enough to eat. . . . The fight for food made its appearance in the army where, under ordinary conditions, no one regarded it as anything but natural that officers should be better fed than privates, and should have their separate mess. When, however, famine made its appearance, and began to affect the rations of the men in the ranks, angry and envious glances were cast towards the officers' mess." [1]

The embittered masses of civilians and soldiers made the Emperor responsible for the famine, misery, and massacre of the war; hence dissatisfaction from below. Moreover, the physical and moral crisis growing out of the interminable strife fortified the dissatisfaction from below by dissatisfaction from above. An appreciable section of the nobility, the manufacturers, and the military lost confidence in the Emperor, who had practically delegated his authority to the General Headquarters. One of the most striking illustrations of the situation which made many good people in Germany feel that the Emperor had deserted them, was the appointment of Dr. Michaelis as Imperial Chancellor in July, 1917, when Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg was dismissed because Hindenburg and Ludendorff thought they could not work with him. The Emperor was forced to appoint Dr. Michaelis, the Prussian Food Controller, whose principal qualification for the office

[1] Rosenberg, A., *The Birth of the German Republic,* New York, Oxford University Press, 1931, p. 91.

was his deference to Ludendorff. Many good people in Germany were shocked to see that the civil government of Germany should be entrusted at a critical hour to an utter mediocrity.

Thus the dissatisfaction from below was reinforced by the dissatisfaction from above. Both being abundantly nourished by the crisis created by the war, there resulted in Germany, as a year before in Russia, a revolution. The German nobility, of course, was not republican, but it became disaffected enough and had been bled enough to be unable to resist the revolution toward which the dissatisfaction from below was pushing the country.

The political bankruptcy of the weakened nobility, defeated in the war, left government to the Socialists, who were the only strong and organized political group, ambitious and somewhat prepared through traditional opposition, to take up power. The mass of the middle class of Germany, while it had been rapidly advancing both economically and culturally since the middle of the eighteenth century, remained politically backward and unambitious, because of the peculiarities, previously discussed, of the German national psychology. The revolution found the middle class, to say nothing of the lower middle class, untrained in political activities and completely bewildered by the events. As a result, while the proletariat and the revolutionary element of the intelligentsia were solidly enough massed in the election of the Constituent Assembly in January, 1919, around the Socialist ticket, the bulk of the German population—the middle class and the lower middle class—scattered their votes among half a dozen parties.

The entire decade 1919-1929 in the political history of Germany may be properly considered as the incubation period preparatory to the bid for power on the part of the younger

element of the middle and the lower middle classes. The future historian of Germany may well find that the incubation was accelerated by the excessive heat furnished partly by the misery of the classes in question, who were ruined by the war, inflation, and the costly measures of social relief enacted under the socialistic pressure; partly by the proximity of the Russian bolshevism; and partly by the dynamism of Hitler and his close associates. It may be mentioned parenthetically that bolshevism or communism had in Germany a much more ominous clang than in other countries separated from Soviet Russia by greater distances. The middle class of Germany knew only too well the bitter fate of the Russian middle class at the hands of the Bolshevists. It was alarmed at the growth in Germany of communistic activities, open and covert, which were countenanced for reasons of varying respectability and purity of intention by the cabinets in which the Social Democrats were the majority party.

The day of the general election in 1930 was undoubtedly a turning point in the political history of Germany. Three things about this election, September 14, will arrest the attention of historians. In the first place, the total number of deputies—which was 544 in the election of 1928, one representative being allotted under the Weimar Constitution to every 60,000 votes cast—rose to 577 in the election of September, 1930. Now 82 per cent of the electorate expressed their political preferences; and the swelling of the polls was due very largely to the increased vote of the middle and the lower middle classes, who formerly were truant voters. The second interesting aspect of the election of September 14, 1930, was the spectacular rise in the number of Nazi representatives, which increased from 12 to 107. The third important feature was a further considerable increase of the Communist representation in the

Reichstag. Having started with 22 deputies in the election of January, 1919, the Communists polled in 1924, 45 seats; in 1928, 54; and in September, 1930, they won 77 and the position of the fourth numerically strong party in the Reichstag. All the rest of the parties, with the exception of the Centre (Catholic) which gained 9 seats, lost more or less heavily.

The new Reichstag was destined to be a short-lived one. The ever-increasing pressure for power on the part of the Hitler group contributed so much to a further confusion of the general political atmosphere in Germany and the instability of the Government that a new general election became unavoidable and took place in July, 1932. In this new election, the total number of deputies rose to 607 as against 577 in the election of September 14, 1930. The polls were further swollen by the middle class, which was now heavily massed under the electoral banner of Hitler. The Nazi obtained 230 seats, an increase of 123, and thus became the strongest single party in the Reichstag. The Communists obtained 88 seats, an increase of 11; the Centre, 96, an increase of 9. The other parties sustained losses, especially the parties which in the past elections were nourished by the scattered middle-class vote.

Next, the incubation period found its completion in the election of March, 1933, in which 90 per cent of the electorate voted and in which the Nazis obtained 288 seats. After allying themselves with the German Nationalists, who returned 52 deputies, they secured a majority in the Reichstag—to be exact, 340 seats out of the total of 647—and became the Government of Germany.

Certainly, the postwar "dejection-psychosis" (*Verzweiflungspsychose*), the black outlook made of the admixture of international humiliation, economic difficulties, and disgust with the communistic and nihilistic licentiousness in speech

and conduct, played its role in the rise of National Socialism; but that role was rather one of fanning up flame with wind than of lighting a new fire. The fire was there—the "totalitarianism" of the epoch. Its leaping up to a Plutonian volume and height—architectonic as the National Socialists believe, or destructive as many people not unfriendly to Germany fear—was merely a question of time. Contrary to the assertion made in the biography of Hitler by Herr Konrad Heiden, the rise of the Führer was not the simple case of "an alliance formed by a foundered man and a foundered nation."[1]

Herr Heiden's diagnosis is not any more realistic than is Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* as the true expression of the mind of the majority of the combatants. Remarque's heroes represented the minority, those combatants, and also soldiers of the rear, who, though spared by shells, returned home with badly shattered nerves. The sentiment of the majority of combatants was much more truthfully reflected in the works of Ernest Jünger.[2] Like Remarque, a participant in the World War, he drew his inspiration from the companionship of men who, though hit by shells, retained their nervous vigor and came home filled with the proud remembrance that their drive for the world empire had several times come close to success; that the German legions had held two capital cities of their opponents, Brussels and Bucharest, and had horrified Paris, had made Petrograd uneasy, and London uncomfortable. This true spirit of Germany, dauntless even though defeated, found its true expression in the

[1] Heiden, K., *Hitler: A Biography,* New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1936, p. 318.

[2] Jünger, E., *Das Antlitz des Weltkrieges,* Berlin, Neufeld & Henius, 1930; *Blätter und Steine,* Hamburg, Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1934; *Der Kampf als inneres Erleben,* Berlin, Mittler & Sohn, 1932; *In Stahlgewittern,* Berlin, Mittler & Sohn, 1922; *Krieg und Krieger,* Heransgegeben von Ernst Jünger, Berlin, Junker und Dünnhaupt, 1930.

inscription on the monument erected soon after the war in the courtyard of the University of Berlin to the students, alumni, and teachers who fell in the World War: *"Invictis Victi Victuri."* [1]

In his speech-making during the incubation period Hitler denounced the "colossal injustice of the Allies to Germany." He dwelt upon the hardships of the blockade even long after it had been terminated. He lamented before the receptive ear of the landowners their indebtedness; before the peasants, the tax burden; and before the workers, the misery of unemployment. To all he promised, though vaguely and discreetly enough, a just relief. He insisted upon the danger, real enough, of Marxism. He looked, however, far beyond all these evils and remedies; and as the incubation period was progressing, he spoke ever more frequently of the ultimate totalitarian objective of the National Socialist regime, the objective which he had clearly outlined in *Mein Kampf*. The German Empire must not only gather up within its folds all the Germans, but must lead the nation to a dominating position. Germany "must not tolerate the rise of another great military power on the Continent of Europe." Such is, in the main, the Führer's "political testament by which the German nation must be permanently guided in its international policies." [2]

In other words, the Irredentist watchword, "The same blood belongs in this same commonwealth," [3] is a mere introduction to the mighty totalitarian drive, the ultimate purpose of which is the *Endreich,* the German world empire. In this drive, the legitimate needs of Germany for territorial and eco-

[1] To the undefeated, the defeated victors of the future.
[2] *Mein Kampf,* Verlag Franz Eher Nachfolger (Edition 1930), SS. 439, 711, 754.
[3] *Ibid.,* S. 1.

nomic expansion are exaggerated by the totalitarian impetus.

Now that Germany is again on the mighty ascendant, the complaints over the blind injustice of history which resounded in the denunciations of the Treaty of Versailles are replaced with proud mystical assertions like the following:

> "Now as ever the father and king of all things is the moral truth. Only through the racial content of this master-law is, in substance, higher life possible. What yesterday was regarded as a heresy is recognized today as a law, because it has proved its right to live. . . . The force, freshness, and youthfulness of a movement are not compatible with sentimentality. All mental criteria are false when applied to the life of a people, because they are really invalid and make the people unfit for life. He has right who wields it (*Recht hat wer Recht behält*). History is always right. 'The history of the world is the world tribunal.'" [1]

Many signs seem to concur in showing that the Führer is wholeheartedly supported by the vast majority of the people, particularly with regard to the *Endreich* part of his program. At all events, a future not far distant will definitely reveal what is the true nature of the National Socialist foreign policy. Is it simply the work of a leader who succeeded in tricking a nation, depressed with political and economic miseries, into investing him with supreme power, to hold which he has to excite the people further with grandiose visions of imperialism, in lieu of more tangible and lasting achievements? Or is it, as seems more probable, a surge of the people who, in the course of the historical alternation between "totalitarianism"

[1] Weltzien, E., "'Saint Joan' als nationalpolitischer Bildungsstoff," *Die neueren Sprachen*, 1934, Heft 4, S. 154.

and "infinitism," has reached the point where the masses have become imbued with the impetus for territorial expansion, power, and glory—the impetus characteristic of the current epoch of their national history but, until recently, experienced and expressed only by the upper classes? Is not, indeed, Hitler's success that of a man who picked up a political opportunity that was around the corner but could not be picked up except by someone risen from the ranks, someone ambitious, peculiarly gifted, and generally eligible to be accepted by the totalitarian popular masses as genuinely one of themselves and yet their natural superior morally and intellectually, "the living unknown soldier" worthy to be invested with the supreme command?

The ultimate wisdom of his leadership and the ultimate wisdom of popular devotion to him, as well as that of the totalitarian drive itself, will be judged by the future historian. In the meantime the National Socialist regime employs for the purpose of mobilizing the national forces in the service of its totalitarian objectives the old means which German leaders always employed during the climax of a totalitarian epoch. This method, designed to achieve national singleness of purpose, consists in removing at least temporarily, the fundamental dualism and discord of the German mind by marrying "infinitism" to "totalitarianism."

A very striking symbol of the union between "totalitarianism" and "infinitism" is found in the new Prussian heraldic emblem. It is a one-headed black flying eagle with its open beak turned toward the right of the observer, with a silver swastika on its breast, and with golden talons. In the right claw is held a silver sword and in the left, two golden lightning flashes. Above the eagle is a scroll with the inscription: "God with Us."

Another not less significant reflection of the union between "totalitarianism" and "infinitism" in a kind of Dionysian marriage of Mars and Sibylla was a ceremony staged during the Olympic games in Berlin in August, 1936, and described in an Associated Press dispatch as follows:

"Berlin, Aug. 13 (AP).—One hundred thousand spectators, including Chancellor Adolf Hitler, witnessed a dazzling military spectacle presented by the German army, navy, and air force tonight in the Olympic Stadium.

"Fully 200 drummers, 1750 other band musicians and 1400 soldiers, sailors and members of the air force goose-stepped smartly down the cinder path on which Olympic records were so recently broken. Past the Führer's loge they marched as the jammed stadium roared its applause.

"The ceremony and military tattoo preceded a military band concert in which the massed bands blared historic marches and the overture of Wagner's opera 'Rienzi.'

"The great bowl then darkened and against the background of gloom four points of light could be seen, one on the Nazi swastika at the east end of the stadium, two falling on the Führer's standard and the Olympic standard at either end of his loge, and one on the Olympic flame burning at the marathon gate.

"Then from the tunnel beneath the marathon gate emerged a broad stream of flame. It was a column of goose-stepping soldiers carrying torches. It divided into two streams of light flowing slowly along two sides of the arena. Finally, after forming a fiery pattern, it dissolved into a single border of flame around the whole stadium.

"Within this frame of fire, fifes sounded weirdly and drums rolled. These were soon augmented by a fanfare

of trumpets from the marathon gate, which in turn was answered by the blare of the bands until finally the great bowl of the stadium was filled and dominated by the brazen flood of sound.

"The spectators' enthusiasm reached its climax when, after the command, 'Helmets off for prayers!' the massed bands played the Soldier's Hymn. The ceremony closed with a great parade past Hitler."

We omit from consideration the technicalities of political, economic, administrative, police, and judiciary measures of inducement and pressure used by the totalitarian State in the delicate process of marrying "infinitism" to "totalitarianism." They all converge on developing in the nation the condition of intoxicating impetus (*Wucht, Urgewaltigkeit, Ungestüm*), under which the totalitarian goal readily takes on the appearance of the supreme means of attaining the infinite truth, beauty, and goodness. The principal psychological methods of creating the psychological condition in question are the appeal to mysticism by way of political mysticism and the cultivation of the readiness for self-sacrifice by casting a sacred halo of heroism around the individual's unquestioning obedience to the totalitarian State, which controls all the aspects of life—political, economic, physical, and moral.

The Nazi impetus is fraught with far-reaching surprises which we shall study after cataloguing some of the more characteristic devices used by the National Socialist Third Reich in promoting political mysticism and totalitarian heroism

POLITICAL MYSTICISM[1]

Such observers of German conditions as attribute an undue importance to the economic factor in history usually reason that nations, like armies, travel on their stomachs, and that the German stomach is National Socialism's destiny. In reality both armies and nations, in particular the Dionysian German nation, rise to the supreme effort on the wings of faith in some transcendent values, in fact, on the wings of mysticism, be that even a politicized mysticism.

The structure of political mysticism erected by the National Socialists is a two-bell belfry. One of these bells sounds continually the "miracle of Hitler"—that the Führer "embodies pure Germanism in his earthly shell," that he is the magic "source of the revival of the German racial spirit among all the classes and callings."[2] The professions of political mysticism usually made on behalf of the Führer by his lieutenants extoll him as "a true knight without fear or fault who has taken the flag of mankind into his strong hands and, with his head raised high, is carrying it against the menace of oncoming hordes inflamed with the criminal Marxist lunacy of communistic world revolution";[3] also as the prophet of the German destiny, the inspired Drummer of the Third Realm.[4] The latter symbolic characterization of the Führer was coined by himself; in the speech which he addressed March 3,

[1] For definition of political mysticism *see* above, Book One, Chapter I, "English Political Mysticism." As previously indicated, the treatment of Political Mysticism in this work is adapted from our *Shackled Diplomacy*, New York, Barnes & Noble, 1934, Ch. III.

[2] Havorka, N. (Editor), *Zwischenspiel Hitler*, Wien-Leipzig, Reinhold-Verlag, 1932, S. 140.

[3] Dr. Paul Goebbels' address before the National Socialist Convention, September, 1936.

[4] *Zwischenspiel Hitler, cit.*, S. 141.

1924, to the Court that tried him for high treason, Hitler said:

"The vision that I have had from the very first day of my political activity meant to me a thousand times more than the office of a Minister of State. I wanted to be the destroyer of Marxism. I will fulfill this task and when I have done this, the title of a Minister of State will be a ridiculous title to give me. I have wanted to be a Drummer; this not because of humility but because I consider it the highest office in comparison with which the other is but a trifle." [1]

To quote one of the numerous Nazi references to the mystical gifts of the Führer, who indeed possesses an uncommon gift for popular oratory *modo teutonico,* we borrow the following passage from an issue of the *Völkisher Beobachter:*

"Hitler speaks as only a few men have spoken at the great turning points of the history of peoples. Only men who have been entrusted by Providence with the highest mission can speak as he does. Only those to whom the Demon [2] has revealed the true and profound significance of the WORD can talk as Hitler does. And when he invokes the giants of the German past as so many gods, protectors of the German fight which we are fighting today, it is nothing else but a religious supplication, an affirmation under the strength of oath of their unity, of which the Germans are conscious and in which, despite all the errors, blunders, and catastrophes, they have always found again their primeval capacity for impetus [*Urgewaltigkeit*] which is today resuscitated in the ardent national passion called National Socialism."

[1] *Zwischenspiel Hitler, cit.,* S. 141. [2] Δαιμον, the Deity.

The historical mission of the Germans in the world is another fundamental *Motiv* of the National Socialist political mysticism, or, to revert to our simile, the persistent sound of the other bell.

In substance, as stated in *Mein Kampf*,[1] the mission is that of *pax germanica*, "peace . . . based on the victorious sword of a master-nation and bringing the world into the service of a higher culture."[2]

The Führer's inspirer, H. S. Chamberlain, the prophet of "Nordicism," proclaimed:

> "At any rate it is only shameful indolence of thought, or disgraceful historical falsehood, that can fail to see in the entrance of the German tribes into the history of the world the rescuing of agonizing humanity from the clutches of the everlasting bestiality."[3]

And Herr Moeller van der Bruck, in his peroration on the *Endreich*, declares:

> "The beast encroaches more and more on the soul of man. The shadow of Africa creeps on Europe. Ours to stand guard on the threshold of human values."[4]

As nowhere else, perhaps, the totalitarian nature of the new German political mysticism is expressed with sibyllic forcefulness in the following passages of Spengler's *Hour of Decision*, written on the eve of the advent of the Nazi Third Reich:

> "The truth is, a new form of world has arisen, as the precondition for future crisis which must one day set in

[1] Cf. also *Zwischenspiel Hitler*, *cit.*, S. 150.
[2] *Mein Kampf*, *cit.*, p. 438.
[3] Chamberlain, H. S., *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, New York, Dodd, Mead & Co., 1912, Vol. I, p. 495.
[4] *Op. cit.*, S. 322.

with crushing force. Russia has been reconquered morally by Asia, and it is doubtful if the British Empire any longer has its center of gravity in Europe. The rest of "Europe" lies now between Asia and America—between Russia and Japan in the East and between North America and the British Dominions in the West—and consists substantially only of Germany which is taking up her old position as a frontier against "Asia." Italy, which is a power as long as Mussolini lives and may perhaps acquire in the Mediterranean the wider base for a true world-power; and France, who once more considers herself lord of Europe . . . are all possibly, or probably, evanescent phenomena. The transformation of the world's political forms proceeds apace, and no one can imagine what the maps of Asia, Africa, and even of America will look like a few decades hence. . . .

"In any case: when the white proletariat breaks loose in the United States, the Negro will be on the spot, and behind him Indians and Japanese will await their hour. Similarly a black France would have little hesitation in outdoing the Parisian horrors of 1792 and 1871. And would the white leaders of the class war ever hesitate if colored outbreaks opened up a way for them? They have never been fastidious in the means they use. It would make no difference if the voice of Moscow ceased to dictate. It has done its work, and the work goes forward of itself. We have waged our wars and class wars before the eyes of color, have humiliated and betrayed each other; we have even summoned it to take part in them. Would it be anything to wonder at if at last color were to act on its own account?

"At this point history towers high over economic distress and internal political ideals. The elemental forces of life are themselves entering the fight, which is for all or nothing. The prefiguration of Caesarism will soon become clearer, more conscious and unconcealed. The mask will fall completely from the age of the parliamentary interlude. All attempts to gather up the content of the future into parties will soon be forgotten. The Fascist formations will pass into new, unforeseeable forms, and even present-day nationalism will disappear. There remains as a formative power only the warlike 'Prussian' spirit—everywhere and not in Germany alone. Destiny, once compacted in meaningful forms and great traditions, will now proceed to make history in terms of formless individual powers. Caesar's legions are returning to consciousness.

"Here, possibly even in our own country, the ultimate decisions are waiting for their man. In presence of these the little aims and notions of our current politics sink to nothing. He whose sword compels victory here will be the lord of the world. The dice are there ready for this stupendous game. Who dares to throw them?"[1]

The purest Nordic nation, that is the Germany purified in the Titanic rebirth called the Third Reich, is declared as appointed to lead, by force if necessary, to the true light and morality all the other lands, beginning with Russia. This basic theme of political mysticism is presented under several variations, aimed to reach the Germans of various religious

[1] From *Hour of Decision,* by Oswald Spengler, New York, 1934, pp. 34, 35, 164, 165, by permission of and special arrangement with Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., authorized publishers; *Jahre der Entscheidung, cit.,* SS. 23, 228 ff.

attitudes, the Nazi religious control having failed thus far to achieve the totalitarian paganization of the nation. As typical variations, the following may be cited.

Under the auspices of the Ministry for Propaganda and Popular Enlightenment a mystery play entitled *Das Spiel von Job dem Deutschen* was produced and widely distributed. To borrow from President George Norlin's analysis of the play, it—

> "draws to a close with the triumph of German arms over the powers of Satan. The angels sing: 'Praise be the Lord who loves strength in the strong. Praised be war, and praised be the victory of the German.' Finally, God Himself speaks to Job: 'German, your line shall be the fountain of the world . . . The whole earth will I give you that you may lead it and rule it to my will. . . . I will give the earth's glory to your race and from now on you shall be the race to receive my revelation. The holiest treasures of mankind shall be in your keeping.' "[1]

As another variation may be mentioned the following profession of political mysticism made by Count Ernst von Reventlow, in charge of the "faith movement" in the Third Reich:

> "I believe in man, the master of the earth and of all its powers. I believe in the German, the master of himself, who was conceived under the Nordic heaven, between the Alps and the sea, suffered at the hands of the papists and the servants of Mammon, was dashed into the inferno with the whips of calumny, and after years of misery and hopelessness, rose from the murk of national death to the

[1] Norlin, G., *Fascism and Citizenship,* The University of North Carolina Press, 1934, pp. 17 f. Cf. Loesch, K. C., von, *Deutsche Züge im Antlitz der Erde,* München, Verlag Bruckmann.

heaven of Eckhart, Bach, Goethe, and is now seated by the side of his brother from Nazareth, on the right hand of the Eternal One. . . . I believe in the holy spirit of humanity and in the new church—the future communion of all who place their duty toward their country above everything else." [1]

It is on the thorough conversion of the German youth to the totalitarian ends of the Third Reich that the immediate future of Germany and her relations with the outside world depend. Therefore we quote as the last, but not least or shortest, variation of the basic National Socialist theme of political mysticism the profession of faith of a leading young Nazi enthusiast; it was published two years before Hitler's advent to power:

"The destiny of the German is to form the first truly natural racial commonwealth which, acting as a guide and example, shall be the path to the universal Third Realm.

"The inhabitant of the earth most harassed for a thousand years by his inner split, the German has also the deepest yearning for unity. Torn asunder by seemingly irreconcilable inner contradictions and built on polarities, the German people as no other nation struggling and growing in the heart of Europe during a thousand-year-long history is destined to be the purest epitome of the human species, with all the dangers and blessings of such a mission. He in whom the hardest thesis and the bitterest antithesis have fought their thousand-year-long fight, is also the man that is ripe for the holy synthesis; he is chosen to be the first to give the final decision, whether

[1] Quoted in *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15 décembre 1935, pp. 777 f.

chaos or cosmos shall prevail. When the German people will have fought through to the place for which it is destined and will have adopted its Leader, the German spirit will be the intermediary, first between Russia and the Anglo-Saxon world and last between the North and the South. The German people is appointed to this task as the only one of the great western nations that has continuously cultivated the oriental soul; the German people is free from the hatred-generating heritage of greedy colonizers, capitalists, and militarists. As the Orient, by its emanations of eternity, saved our souls from enslavement to the time boundaries which we call our lives—the enslavement fraught with the menace of assassination of conscience—so the West, through the medium of the Germans, will bring back into common use its priceless gift, which is the creative genius, the path of creative love. . . . The German intermediary will through example show the Orient and the Occident the way to this salvation. The eternal German has bequeathed to the noblest German minds the belief in the ultimate union of mankind. He has been, however, again and again deceived by the unripeness of humanity, in blood and spirit, has been frustrated by the inroads of alien, denaturing elements. "Religion," falsified by the Guelph popes, forced upon the people and exploited by the princes, traitors to their race, also Roman law, the antique art, and French literature, in turn and order intruded on and deeply endangered the German soul, in like manner as alien armed forces invaded the German land, as the Slavonic, Latin, Dinaric, and above all Semitic blood invaded the German body. Yet, thanks to the unparalleled power of rejuvenation, the indestructible capacity for rebirth, Germany raised her-

self to ever-higher vitality and to an ever-higher pinnacle from each profound humiliation, from every seemingly fatal fall; the nation had, through the unshakable Siegfriedian faith and tenacity, melted in its inner self all alien elements, and had shaken them down without weakening the primeval kernel of its true substance.

"Conscious of this blessed power of rebirth, the German genius, soaring high and wide despite the disappointing experiences with the anti-Faustian foreign lands, has never renounced its faith in the ultimate union of all humanity. Better shall we be called fools than let love flee from the earth. . . .

"We build in ourselves a synthesis of the Hellenic and Nordic spirit, of western paganism and eastern Christianity, in order to erect the Third Realm of life, after the union of North and South, of East and West, has been effected in our souls. We are preparing ourselves for the world mission of the creative nation. We bring our souls to ripeness in order to make ourselves worthy of seeing the triumphant entry of the future Leader, who will bring to the world the first true tidings of the true peace and will bestow unity on mankind."[1]

THE CULT OF HEROISM

It is rightly said that all great German plays and operas are tragedies. French Apollonian poets, even skeptics, sing the joy of life and turn away from the problem of death. Charles of Orléans (d. 1464) happily expressed, in a *rondeau,* this characteristically French attitude of mind:

[1] Eschenhagen, G., *Entscheidung: Bekenntnis eines jungen Deutschen,* Berlin-Stiglitz, Heinrich Wilhelm Hendriock Verlag, 1931, SS. 242 ff.

"Worry, Anxiety, Melancholy,
Go away and don't return!"

German Dionysian poets, on the contrary, seek, as it were, the company of these sad entities; world woe, the thought of death (*Weltschmerz, Todesgedanke*), are their favored tunes. Abundant material can be drawn from German literature to illustrate this tragic conception of life (*die tragische Auffassung des Lebens*) held by the great German literary masters, those most influential representatives and teachers of their nation. We limit ourselves to just one illustration of the kind, taken from Hermann Burte, the already-mentioned contemporary writer, very influential in the pre-Nazi Youth Movement and favored also by the leaders of the Hitler Youth. As a preparation for Wiltfeber's suicide, the author makes the hero rave to his sweetheart, amidst transports of philosophized dejection, as follows:

> "You will never be able to understand me, no woman can: the universe has a meaning to me, and even if it has no purpose, it has laws. And the same law governs the day of consummation of one's fate and the years of one's life. And I must tell you what I know: I am destined for a martyr's wreath! Nothing is the Thing, everything is the content of its meaning, and woe to me, I can read it."[1]

Why should the German have this tragic conception of life? In all probability because of the inner split between the earthly or totalitarian and the otherworldly or mystical tendencies of his mind.

The following analysis of the German tragic view of life

[1] *Wiltfeber der ewige Deutsche, cit.*, S. 314.

written by Herr F. Sieburg is in substance true to reality, despite an element of exaggeration:

> "We work for work's sake, because we do not want happiness. The idea of fighting for one's happiness is not merely alien but actually repugnant to our nature. Is happiness not an unheroic state? . . . Life is hard and men are harder. But we Germans cling not so much to belief in the happiness which is in store for man as to the conviction of his potential greatness. At present we are obsessed by the feeling that the reconstruction of Germany is the only justification of our life and work, but this feeling is not unmixed with residue of helplessness and despair. Our aspiration toward the future and our determination to shape it are even now hampered by the temptation to seek refuge in the future as an escape from the torments and confusion of German everyday life."[1]

[1] *Germany, My Country,* London, Jonathan Cape, 1935, pp. 48, 55.
Explaining the genesis of his volume, Herr Sieburg says: "The book was already known to my fellow-countrymen when in March [1933] the national revolution broke out and, in a few weeks, transformed our country from top to bottom. . . . In a word, the book describes not the German revolution but what prepared the way for it. It describes the growth of the nationalistic state of mind which rendered this revolution necessary. It tries to depict the Messianic faith with which the youth of Germany took refuge in nationalism, because it seemed firm land which afforded a refuge from the fierce torrent of time, with its materialism and its license. My aim was to portray not so much the German Reich and German politics as the German nation and the individual German. . . . A French friend, who liked the book, wrote to me that he did not know whether it was a picture of Germany or only the picture of a tragic soul. I have always regarded this question as a justification of my work, for what I wanted to do was, in fact, to exhibit clearly those elements which dwell in the soul of every individual German and distinguish him from other citizens of this world. What I was seeking, therefore, was, if you will permit me the somewhat arrogant expression, more than the man; it was the German." (*Ibid.,* pp. 11 f.)

As already pointed out in the course of this study, during the totalitarian epochs like the present, the German is not free from discord between the two basic motives of his inner life, the totalitarian desire for completeness, oneness within himself as a creature of the earth, and the transcendent longing to embrace the infinite—the universe with all its manifold varieties which issue from and merge into the Absolute, that "unity of all differences." During a totalitarian epoch of his history, the German seeks escape from this basic discord of his mind in impetuous and vehement work for the future greatness of the race, and in what he believes to be heroic creative sacrifice of the individual to the racial whole and its destinies.[1] On the contrary, during the epochs of his history

[1] Cf. the following worth-while example of Nazi self-analysis bearing on the psychological and philosophical experiences which doubtless played an important role in the conversion to Nazism of many of its enthusiasts:

"They have lost faith in science and reason as the powers capable of building up a better world. They experience repulsion, physical repulsion, toward all those over-clever ladies and gentlemen with their self-righteous rationalism which had robbed our fathers and grandfathers of their faith in God and men and abandoned them to the most abject poverty, spiritual and material.

"The individual, uprooted from the relationships determined by the hierarchy of values prevalent in former centuries and from the sacred, stable certainties depending upon those values, finds himself hopelessly confused amidst events which shape the course of history for a long future; he looks in anxiety and horror for something solid to hold to, for an Absolute against which he may lean his individual existence, so that it may not senselessly pass away. As a result, men in whom the feeling of belonging to their race was still alive, saw, as if by a sudden revelation, that the godly they had sought and had been longing for in their mystic yearning was deposited in their own race, hidden somewhere in the depth of the blood and its destinies. They turned away from all rationalistic clap-trap. They worried little about scholars who assert that "nation" and "race"—those noble concepts—are vague, debatable concepts; they knew that some other savants affirmed the contrary. They needed no proofs to uphold their faith because they had penetrated the truth of the new faith not through the intellect; vehemently it arose from an inarticulate feeling. When the concept "nation" and "race" were sealed with the blood of such men and women, these concepts took on a fascinating appearance and became a new reality. The man of the twentieth century sought a new *"Mythus,"* a new creative faith. He has found it in the Third Reich, in which nation is the supreme value, higher than

when he was motivated primarily by the longing for the infinite he sought escape from the inner dualism in the undying past that touches upon the eternal and strove to stand closer to the Kingdom of God and its truth, for the triumph of which he neglected earthly comforts, political and economic, and was ready to sacrifice his very life. Then the German nation was, as it may become again in the future, the nation of religious leaders, of poets, and philosophers.

But to return to the ties of heroism employed during the climaxes of totalitarian epochs, as they are used now by the Nazi, for harnessing "infinitism" to the totalitarian chariot, we may recall, by way of diversion, how in his electoral campaign at the close of the World War, Mr. Lloyd George promised that, if maintained in office, he would make the country fit for heroes to live in. Soon, however, the slogan was turned against him by the Opposition, and his second administration was described as rapidly transforming the country into a place which only heroes could endure. Not quite fair to the England of the second Lloyd George administration, the description in question would fit much better the present-day Third Reich. All its prescriptions, prohibitions, and proscriptions are a burden to its inhabitants. The Führer doubtless realizes this and builds a safety valve on his nation's "Wagnerian taste

which its supporters do not know. Those who do not believe in it are worshippers of false gods. . . .

"Blood and soil, the nobility and high breeding of the race, the breaking down of material enslavement, in a word all for which the Third Reich stands, brings light and hope into former joyless impasses. One can dream about these things, can thrill oneself by thinking of them; this does one more good than calculating political and economic interests and haggling with politicians. Good men want to have something to hope for, to believe in—to be total fellows (*ganze Kerle*). Hence the vital drive (*Drang*) of the full-blooded young generation, for which there was no place under the prior order of things, the drive from the suffocating narrowness of existence out to the fullness of life." (*Zwischenspiel Hitler, cit.*, SS. 7 f.)

for heroics and death." In this, the National Socialist regime exploits skillfully and not without the contagion of the personal example of the Führer himself, the characteristic German tragic conception of life and the periodically recurring totalitarian escape from dualism into the *heroica* of nationalism and patriotism.

The claim, however, is justified that among sincere, educated supporters of the Nazi regime many received at least a part of their education toward heroic individual sacrifice for the sake of transcendent values in no other school of thought than that of Kant, Fichte, Goethe, Nietzsche.

Kant's doctrine of duty is well known; his heroic conception of struggle for existence is set forth as follows in the essay on the *Idea of Universal History:*

> "It seems as if nature cared not at all that man should live happily, but only that he should discipline and develop himself. In the course of history earlier generations seem to carry on their thankless efforts only on account of those that follow, laboring, as it were, to prepare a stage on which they can raise to a higher point the edifice designed by nature; so that only the latest comers can have the good fortune of inhabiting the dwelling which the long series of their predecessors has toiled, though without any conscious intent, to build up. But this is necessary if we once assume it was intended that a species of animals endowed with reason should exist, and that, as a species (which is immortal, though all individuals in it die), they are to attain the full development of all their capacities. . . .
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> "The means which nature used to bring about the development of all man's capacities is the antagonism of

these very capacities as they are manifested in society, an antagonism which in the end is turned into a means for the establishment of social order.

"Now it is just this resistance which awakens man's powers, and which drives him, in the lust for honor, power, and riches, to win for himself a rank among his fellow men *with* whom he cannot live at peace, yet *without* whom he cannot live at all. The natural impulses which prompt this effort are the spurs which drive him to the development of his powers. Without these, in themselves by no means lovely, qualities which set man in social opposition to man so that each finds his selfish claims resisted by the selfishness of all the others, men would have lived on in an Arcadian shepherd life, in perfect harmony, contentment, and mutual love; but all their talents would have remained forever hidden and undeveloped. Thus, as gentle as the sheep they tended, they would have given to their existence a value scarcely greater than that of their cattle. And the place among the ends of creation which was left for the development of rational beings would not have been filled.

"The history of the human species as a whole may be regarded as the unraveling of a hidden plan of nature for accomplishing a perfect civil constitution for society as the sole state of society in which the tendencies of human nature can all be fully developed." [1]

Among the German thinkers who propounded the idea of heroic sacrifice, Fichte deserves our special attention in view of the influence which his writings have exercised on Hitler,

[1] "Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlichen Absicht," Dritter Satz, Vierter Satz, *Sämtliche Werke,* Verlag von Felix Meiner in Leipzig, 1913, B. VI, S. 8 f.

and in view of the place of honor which the philosopher, to be sure suitably adapted, is given in the education of the German youth, in particular of future leaders. Some of his characteristic appeals to the German youth of his time may be recalled here. The personality of Fichte as a leader has found a happy portrayal in Windelband's words:

> "Fichte was a man of iron energy, but also of such indifference to the reactions of the world as to create the constant danger of frustration of his reformatory ideas. He was moved by fiery reformatory zeal; he was possessed of prophetic spirit. He earnestly desired to have mankind accept as an ideal conviction his philosophy, which he believed destined to rebuild the distressingly misshaped world. Indeed, he was possessed of a Kantian devotion to the ideal; he struggled for the triumph of his ideal, went straight toward it, without looking to the right or to the left. He passionately preached the tidings of the Kantian categorical imperative, heedless of whether obedience to it necessitated the sacrifice of his own or other men's personal welfare."[1]

In 1804-1805, after the Napoleonic danger to Germany, in particular to Prussia, had taken a sinister turn, he wrote:

> "Reasonable life consists in this, that the individual forgets himself in the group (*Gattung*), ties his life to the life of all and sacrifices himself for the whole; unreasonable life is this, that the individual thinks of nothing but himself, loves nothing but himself and in relation to himself, and seeks nothing but his own well-being. . . .

[1] Windelband, W., *Die Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, 5. Auflage (1911), S. 211.

"Nothing individual can think in and for itself, but everything lives in the whole, and this whole in unbounded love constantly dies for itself, in order to live anew." [1]

"While their age round them carelessly enjoyed its day, the heroes were lost in lonely thought, in order to discover a law, a causal nexus, which had aroused their astonishment and whose discovery they most yearned for. They sacrificed pleasures and fortunes, they neglected their own affairs, they wasted the finest flowers of their existence, and were ridiculed as fools and dreamers. But their discoveries have been of great value to human life." [2]

In response to the humiliating Treaty of Tilsit, imposed by Napoleon on the defeated Prussia in 1807, Fichte sounded, through his celebrated *Addresses to the German Nation* (*Reden an die Deutsche Nation*), the call for the mobilization of moral and spiritual German forces to safeguard the national honor:

"He has lost all sensitivity who is not aroused at the present condition [of Germany]. . . . You continue to let pass the various circumstances among which you should make your choice and decision. If you persist in your insensitive indifference, then all the evils of serfdom, privations, and humiliations, resulting from contempt and arrogance on the part of the conqueror, will befall you. You will then be knocked and tossed in every nook, because you will be a people without rights and a folk that

[1] *Die Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters,* translated in Engelbrecht, H. C., *Johann Gottlieb Fichte: A Study of His Political Writings with Special Reference to His Nationalism,* New York, Columbia University Press, 1933. Cf. Fichte's *Der geschlossene Handelstaat.*

[2] *Ibid.,* p. 87.

is constantly in somebody else's way, until you can buy, at the price of giving up your nationality and language, a little place somewhere and be extinguished as a nation. . . .

"It depends on you whether you will be the end and last of a race, unworthy of respect and despised by posterity even more than you deserve; whether you will be a generation the history of which—if there still can be any history of the barbarism that will result from your downfall—will make posterity rejoice over your end and praise fate for the justice meted out to you for your unworthiness; or will you be the beginnings and germ of a new time, glorious beyond all your imaginings, and those from whom posterity will reckon the years of their welfare. . . .

"Together with your forefathers, your posterity yet unborn conjures you to action. . . . Foreign lands, in so far as they truly understand themselves and their own interest . . . all humanity counts upon you. . . .

"Do not entertain hope and consolation with the airy argument from the self-repetition of history, and do not believe that on the ruins of the old civilization and out of the nation fallen into barbarism there will rise a new civilization. . . . If you go down, together with you will go down humanity, with no hope of resurrection. . . ."[1]

The parting words of Faust contain this reflection:

"Wisdom's eternal word it is,
Freedom like life is only his
Who conquers in a daily strife."

Goethe, in his best hours of yearning for the infinite, towered above all national envies, rancors, and hatreds; he knew, in

[1] "Reden an die Deutsche Nation" (Vierzehnte Rede), *Johann Gottlieb Fichte's sämmtliche Werke,* Berlin, 1846, Verlag von Vest und Comp., B. VII, SS. 481-499.

his other hours, all the gamut of personal enjoyments. Most willingly, however, he returned to the heroic-missionary moods, of which the following observation found in the *Conversations with Eckermann* is typical:

> "Every extraordinary man has a certain mission to accomplish. If he has fulfilled it, he is no longer needed upon earth in the same form, and Providence uses him for something else. But as everything here below happens in a natural way, the daemons keep tripping him up till he falls at last. Thus it was with Napoleon and many others. Mozart died in his six-and-thirtieth year; Raphael at the same age; Byron only a little older. But all these had perfectly fulfilled their missions; and it was time for them to depart, that other people might still have something to do in a world made to last a long while." [1]

Professor Henri Lichtenberger gives an enlightening analysis of the heroic mysticism of Goethe. Having discussed the philosophical symbolism of Goethe who, both as a poet and as a student of nature, "saw the Eternal-Human behind the accidental, a type behind the individual, unity behind multiplicity," and having traced the influence exercised on Goethe by the studies of the mysticism of Plato and Plotin, M. Lichtenberger well summarizes the foundations of Goethe's mystic adoration of heroic sacrifice:

> "This idea of self-sacrifice, through which the religious soul seeks to bring to an end the dolorous illusion of dualism and individualism, is familiar to Goethe. 'Die and be,' exclaims he in the most penetrating of the poems

[1] New York, E. P. Dutton & Co., 1931, Everyman's Library, p. 152.

of the *Divan,* 'Blissful Nostalgia,' in which he sings the mystical theme of the butterfly perishing in the torch and celebrates 'the living that aspires to death in the flame.' Similarly, in the episode of the Homunculus in the second Faust he dwells on the same theme of the individual's voluntary dissolution into the universal life, of joyous submission on the part of a finite creature to the law of the universe, and to the metamorphosis which leads a being, through death, from one life to another and toward ever higher forms of existence." [1]

Goethe did not limit himself to preaching sacrifice but practiced heroism, at least heroism of a kind, in his unsparing work at the message that he had for the Germans and mankind. It may also be recalled that in his daily life, his youth over with, Goethe was inclined to a simplicity bordering on asceticism.[2]

[1] Lichtenberger, H., *La Sagesse de Goethe,* Paris, La Renaissance du Livre, s.d., pp. 39 ff., esp. 45-46.

[2] Cf. D'Harcourt, R., "La sagesse pratique de Goethe," *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 15 mars 1932, pp. 369 ff.:

"Upon his return from Italy to Germany Goethe faithfully practiced simplicity in his working environment. He believed that comfort was adverse to the work of an artist and that a certain element of hardness in the environment was indispensable to the artist's productivity. He divided his beautiful residence of Frauenplan into two parts, one intended for others and one for himself. For the public he sumptuously furnished the front part of the house, made of it a sort of museum of antiquities, and adorned it with an impressive stairway. For himself, he arranged modest quarters in the back part of the house, between the yard and the garden.

" 'You don't see,' he said to Eckermann, 'in my room any divan. I always sit on this old wood chair, and it was only a few weeks ago that I added a plank on the back to rest my head against. Comfortable and luxurious environment lames my thinking power, makes me passive. Magnificent rooms are made for princes and the rich. He who lives there feels satisfied, full to overflowing; he has no aspirations. All this is entirely against my nature. In an apartment like the one I occupied at Karlsbad I feel lazy and I lose the desire for activity. A meagre lodging, on the contrary, like this villainous room where we are now, a little *à la bohème,* in which disorder is order, is

As to Nietzsche's school of heroism, an abundance of evidence bears out what Count Harry Kessler wrote recently about the philosopher's influence on the German youth around the turn of the present century, the youth that made the officers' corps of the German army in the World War:

> "Upon my graduation from the gymnasium in Hamburg, I enrolled first at the University of Bonn and then at Leipzig. I studied law, history of art, and philosophy. Over the desert of doubt and uncertainty which these studies had spread in my mind, Nietzsche rose like a meteor. His writings, still little known, which we passed from hand to hand, seemed to predict not only the coming of a new society but above all the coming of a new man. They created in us a mystic thirst for heroism. His ideas, his prophesies, his style held us spellbound. No writer or philosopher has exercised a similar grip on a whole generation for a long time."[1]

Some of the younger graduates of these schools of heroism —of Kant, Fichte, Goethe, Nietzsche—who fell in the World War made in their letters from the front confessions such as poignantly illustrate the point under consideration—that is, the connection between totalitarian heroism, in particular the desire to escape from the discord between "infinitism" and "totalitarianism," on the one hand, and the love of sacrifice almost for its own sake, on the other.

Thus Otto Heinebach, a student of philosophy at the Uni-

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exactly what I need. My nature finds in such a milieu liberty through activity. I can create, drawing on my inner funds.' . . .

"To Goethe, the art of living consisted above all in the courage for struggle. The sentence that sums him up best is the one he used in speaking of himself: 'I have been a man, which means that I have struggled.' "

[1] "Souvenirs sur Bismarck," *Revue de Paris,* 1er mai 1936, p. 15; *see* also his *Souvenirs d'un Européen,* Paris, Plon, 1937.

versity of Berlin, who was born in August, 1892, and died from wounds in September, 1916, wrote from the Verdun front to his parents:

> "If I should not return, don't let this event break your hearts, I beseech you. Remember, that in all probability I should never have reached full happiness and contentment; perhaps until the end of my natural life I should have remained torn inside by the contradiction between one's wish and power of achievement, between striving and accomplishing, dream and reality. . . ." [1]

Franz Blumenfeld, a student of law at the University of Freiburg, Breisgau, born in September, 1891, killed in December, 1914, wished to explain in a farewell letter to his mother why he had volunteered for the war:

> ". . . even if I were convinced that I could serve my fatherland and its people better in peace than in war, I should think it just as perverse and impossible to let any such calculations weigh with me at the present moment as it would be for a man going to the assistance of somebody who is drowning to stop to consider who the drowning man was and whether his own life were not perhaps the more valuable of the two. *For what counts* is always the readiness to make a sacrifice, not the object for which the sacrifice is made." [2]

[1] Witkop, P., *Briefe gefallener Studenten,* München bei Georg Müller, 1929, S. 212.

[2] *German Students' War Letters, cit.,* p. 20.

Cf. Keyserling, H., *Europe,* New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1928, pp. 109 f.:

"The uncanny element in German immoderation becomes wholly incomprehensible when that element rages without aim. The deepest impulse of the German is opposed to purposefulness. He does that which an inner force compels him to do. But if in the case of an ideal, or of great spirits, this

A poet correctly translated the general sentiment of the nation during the World War when he sang:

"Live on high—O Fatherland beloved,
And deign not to count the dead!
Not one too many fell."

The teachings addressed to the present-day German youth by the National Socialist leaders are keyed in the tones of pious exaltation (*eine Art fromme Wahns*) which characterize the addresses of the Führer. More will be said about this in my next volume, but a few examples should perhaps be given here. The following one is typical of the habitual strains in Hitler's appeals to the youth during the Nazi "incubation" decade 1923-1932, as reported in the *Völkisher Beobachter,* in which there can be readily recognized the Fichtean *Leitmotiv:*

"Through the loss of the war the German people has been delivered over to a lot such as Germany never experienced before. But what is still more horrible is the fact that the people shows itself unworthy of its great past. What torments us most cruelly is the fact that at this grave and decisive hour of the history of Germany millions of Germans do not have the will to be any longer Germans. What do we see around? The triumphs of cowardice and vice. If we should measure the future of Germany by its present, we would have to arrive at this sad conclusion: If our people does not become different from what

leads to the rarest kind of achievement and creation, it has, in the case of the people as a whole, and throughout all its history, characteristically led to what, in *Deutschlands wahrer politischer Mission,* I have defined as 'senseless heroism.' The original model of the German man of action has really been, at all times, the soldier of fortune. The senseless hero-life of the warrior is not without beauty; it is the affirmation of tragedy, and built itself up on it; and all tragedy is deep."

it is now, Germany has no future, and the future would have no meaning, because living for the sake of eating is not life. . . .

"Yet, the day this people will decide once more to serve the country and consecrate its effort to a higher goal, we are sure a miracle will produce itself. But in order that the miracle may produce itself in the mass of the German people, it is necessary that it be accomplished in each individual. . . ."

Addressing 50,000 young Nazi brought to the Nuremberg Convention in September, 1936, as a reward for faithful service to the National Socialist Party, the Führer congratulated them in these words:

"You are finer youth than Germany ever had before. You have the good fortune to be witnesses to a great period." [1]

And the Führer's principal lieutenant, Dr. Alfred Rosenberg, echoed:

"We are entering a great period of history—a period in which not the wiseacres but the brave will come out on top. We must be ready for every sacrifice God demands of us. We must have that which is most indispensable of all raw materials—the ore of the iron heart." [2]

Hero worship is placed by the National Socialists on a broad social basis. For the first time in the history of Germany the triad—soldier, peasant, workman—has found itself included in the scheme of the cultivation of national heroism. As an illustration of the way in which this new pattern is woven

[1] Associated Press, Nuremberg, September 12, 1936.
[2] Associated Press, Nuremberg, September 15, 1936.

into the sacred carpet, the following passage from a paper on the National Socialist Youth Movement may be cited:

"The young generation, whether born before or after the World War, has as a godfather the war experiences. Two million fellow-citizens who fell in the World War remind the young with the voice of their sacrifice that the young are born for the benefit and happiness of the German people as a whole and not for that of themselves as individuals. Therefore, it is much more than simply an attempt to bridge class distinctions when the National Socialist youth is given as a guiding example the triad: Soldier, Peasant, Worker. This triad is a symbolic personification of the philosophy of life which is made of Will, Action, Sacrifice.

"Not every German soldier was a hero. Only a few men chosen by the grace of God can be heroes. But the German soldier showed the attachment to duty which proved stronger than the very will to live. He was a 'socialist' who divided with his comrades even the last piece of bread and the last drink of water, and he was a great character capable of mastering great obstacles because he obeyed his commanders even when the command was hard to fulfill.

"The German peasant-farmer, who does not poetize nature because at times he almost can touch the fog with his hand, goes over to his field and plows it, and plants it, and works and works, never knowing whether he will reap the harvest. He knows nothing else but this duty—to till his land and to extract from it strength and life for the whole nation.

"And as the last example there comes the German

worker. Together with thousands of his fellows who share the like fate, he marches into the factory and stands there, tried hard by life, and yet he creates, humbly and quietly, through his work—'a slave of duty and of iron.'" (Lersch.) [1]

To nourish this heroic disposition on the part of the farmers, in particular, who have been the Führer's staunchest supporters, special and not undeserved compliments are addressed to them, such as they scarcely ever heard under the previous regimes. These compliments are couched along the line of Nietzsche's following thought:

"The peasant is the commonest type of noblesse, for he is dependent upon himself most of all. Peasant blood is still the best blood in Germany—for example, Luther, Niebuhr, Bismarck." [2]

The nation as a whole is instructed in *Mein Kampf:*

"That this world will some day be involved in a life-and-death struggle, no one can doubt. . . . In perpetual conflict the human race has grown to greatness—in perpetual peace it would be ruined." [3]

Dr. Ernst Krieck, Professor of Philosophy and Education at the University of Heidelberg, draws for the benefit of his listeners and readers this conclusion:

"The change in the view of life which is taking place so significantly among the German people is inseparably bound up with a new education, with the culture and

[1] Reimer, G., "Die nationalsozialistische Jugendbewegung und ihr Stil," *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt,* August, 1933, S. 369.
[2] *Peoples and Countries,* Paragraph 13.
[3] Hitler, A., *op. cit.,* S. 149.

training of a new age, with a new conception of State and Law, with the organic economic system and all forms of public affairs. Reduced to a formula, this attitude towards life may be called the realism of a people taking the heroic view of life ('national heroic realism')." [1]

The National Socialist Youth leader, when unveiling a statue of the Archangel Michael as a war memorial, exhorted his listeners as follows:

"Here we will not speak the warm words of peace, the words Home and Fatherland. Our words are spoken in the face of the awful summons of war. Youths, your hands are now raised in an oath before this monument which is erected to the sublimity of bloodshed—and Michael is the Angel of Death and you are swearing that your lives belong to the Reich and your blood to the Leader." [2]

Democracy, in this connection also, is again condemned and presented as an unheroic form of government. The past German leaders who believed that the best capacities of the German people could find their realization under the Weimar Constitution, are characterized as opportunists and hedonists; [3] their supporters are accused of "lascivious apathy, of a confused, colorless, vacillating attitude toward life." [4] The Third Realm wants the young people to understand that "only through the nostalgia for grandeur man can become a great creature." [5]

[1] Krieck, E., "The Education of a Nation from Blood and Soil," *International Education Review*, 1933-1934, III, p. 309.
[2] The *Times* (London), October 31, 1933.
[3] Moeller van der Bruck, A., *op. cit.*
[4] *Zwischenspiel Hitler, cit.*, S. 5.
[5] Harcourt, R., "La jeunesse Hitlérienne," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1er décembre, 1933, p. 518.

The German youth drinks up avidly the Dionysian wine of the *heroica.* A French journalist, by no means a sympathizer, comparing the general appearance of the German youth prior and subsequent to the National Socialist revolution, remarked:

> "Before, they were the picture of dejection and preoccupation. . . . Now they look like an entirely new race of people; one might say they all resemble Lohengrin." [1]

As it is natural for Lohengrins, their totalitarian devotion to their leaders and heroes is not disturbed on the whole by analytical doubts. Yet if after they have accepted the idea of personal sacrifice for the ultimate ends of the Third Realm, the question should worry some of them as to the inevitable sufferings of those who may find themselves in the way of the *Endreich* at home or abroad, a ready answer is supplied. It was given already by H. S. Chamberlain, and is to the effect that the "Powers of Chaos" can not be dealt with gently; that progress is impossible without sanguine struggle; that the supreme right is never polite; that masters cannot be sweet and soft individuals, nor can they always be scrupulously just, while warring upon the "Powers of Chaos." Those who will have distinguished themselves by superlatively faithful and fruitful services to the Third Reich will be granted the supreme honor of burial in the Nazi cemetery at Nuremberg:

> "Described as being 'seeped through and through with the Hitler spirit,' the burial ground will contain beautiful graves for 200 of the National Socialist 'foremost fighters,' surrounded by a laurel grove.
>
> "A quarter of the space allotted to the cemetery will be

[1] Villemin, B., "Fêtes et geôles de Bavière," *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 15 janvier 1934, pp. 360 f.

devoted to the creation of an enormous parade ground in order to facilitate the great parades which take place on the occasion of State funerals.

"Before each body is laid to rest it will lie in state in a huge sarcophagus, which will serve as a bier of honor.

"Every tombstone and grave will be exactly similar in size and design, in order 'to symbolize further the principle of brotherhood of fighters and conquerors.'" [1]

Notwithstanding the various totalitarian exaggerations which characterize the National Socialist preachments of political mysticism and heroism, these two aspects of the activities of the Nazi before and after their advent to power, undoubtedly hold the major secret of the "miracle of Hitler"; that is, they seem to have been the principal instruments through which the epochal ascendancy of "totalitarianism" over "infinitism" [2] operated this time.

As an event of social and political history, the "miracle of Hitler" is a bloodless overthrow of a liberal republic of doctors by an unacademic prophet of a harsh totalitarian State, who was not a victorious general either. This "miracle of Hitler" offers to liberal democracies, which have eyes to see and ears to hear, a clear, historic lesson. The lesson appears to be twofold: the romantic appeal, on the part of a political leader, to the heroic in man's nature may become a more dynamic political force than economic considerations; man is prone to rally to a political philosophy which holds forth, persuasively, a scale of transcendent values.

Those students of contemporary German history seem close to the truth who see in the "miracle of Hitler" a victory of the

[1] Reuter Dispatch, Munich, July 17, 1936.
[2] Cf. pp. 339, 404.

romantic over the economic. The promises of material prosperity which the Nazi had made during the prolonged campaign for political power can hardly be called irresistibly alluring. The National Socialists had spoken in harsh, Spartan-like terms and tones much more of the German's multiple and sacrificial duties to the supreme form of collectivity, the German Third Reich, than of his rights, economic or otherwise. Their socialism was, indeed, a minor attraction in comparison with their nationalistic mysticism and romanticism. The expectations of a material millennium, as a result, played a minor role in the rise of the Nazi. Nor was the stout defiance toward the former Allies, now the mutually distrusting "guardians" of the Treaty of Versailles, the major cause of the Nazi success. The tenacious and quite subtle work of the postwar German diplomats, trained in the school of Müller, Stresemann, and Brüning, had already resulted in the abrogation of several important provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, and further success was in view. Thus, wind was being taken out of Nazi sails trimmed for the liquidation of the economic, military, and territorial consequences of the loss of the war.

But in one very important sphere of national life, the field was left free for Nazi conquest of political power. That vital field was the field of transcendent values, where man seeks his philosophical reasons for existence. Fortified by the possession of this field, the National Socialists took the political stronghold with a swiftness and smoothness that would have been astounding, almost miraculous, if not for the simple, sober fact that man is above all a worshipful being. He loses his power to live when he loses his faith in something for which to live. Man cannot hold his own in the struggle of life unless he has faith in himself; but he cannot have faith in himself unless he believes in something beyond and above himself. When, be-

cause of any faith-shattering experience, man loses his old faith, he is hungry and thirsty for a new faith. As a result, what seemed to be the bewildering victory of Nazism was, in truth, an easy conquest by a faith of the faithless emptiness and inanity created by false "Liberals," who had spread among the German middle-class and lower-middle-class parents and youths alike the impression that, in the end, liberalism meant nothing more or less than skepticism, relativism, and licentiousness, individual and social. Thus, false "Liberals," who influenced the school, the press, the theater, the radio, and the rostrum, had succeeded in shattering in many Germans, especially of the younger generation, the traditional German faith—that admixture of Christian idealism, German traditionalism, and moderate nationalism. For that shattered faith, pseudo-Liberals had no substitute to offer.

True liberalism, as a philosophy of life, does not have to fear competitors. It draws its inspiration, in the last analysis, from the respect for the dignity of human personality and for its sovereign, inalienable rights of liberty—religious, political, philosophical, and economic. These rights, the true Liberal believes, may reasonably be restricted only by the rights of others and are to be surrendered to the collectivity only as an emergency measure when a mass movement is necessary to protect, indeed, to save individuals from the loss of their lives or their inalienable rights. True liberalism is, then, a tolerant and cooperative attitude in search of truth—religious or philosophical, economic, social, aesthetic. True liberalism does not mean having no conviction, no loyalty to a definite scale of values; it means a reasonable respect for the sincere convictions of others and a willingness for a reasonable compromise in the application of conflicting scales of values, professed by individuals or groups, to the organization of law and order.

False liberalism with its bacchanalia of skepticism, relativism, and licentiousness is, on the other hand, subject to the inevitable competition from any philosophy of life and government that would seem to give to sound and unspoiled hearts a noble "reason for existence." Socialism, in particular its extreme form, communism or bolshevism, sought to supply such "reason for existence"; and at times it looked as if communism were going to dig the grave for false liberalism in Germany. But then, to the element of "infinitism" in the German, which never completely leaves him even in the most totalitarian periods of his history, the communistic wallowing—in word or deed—in low, drab, cynical materialism was unbearably repulsive. Not only did the average German revolt against the ugly violence which communism preached and had already amply put into practice in Russia and which was producing no better results than misery, poverty, and tyrannical regimentation for all except the highest-placed communistic bosses; but he had also sensed that communism, in the last analysis, would reduce human personality to the position of a mere economic atom. The communistic materialistic conception of man as a mere physiological machine, as an electro-chemical accident of electrons and protons, was unacceptable to the average German; it was repulsive both as an ugly, gruesome philosophy of life and as a source of grave political dangers at the hands of individuals to whom man is nothing but a piece of physiological machinery.

Thus, the average German, in his longing for a philosophy of life which would give him reasons for existence, was, on the one hand, deserted by liberalism which had effaced itself before false liberalism; on the other hand, he was repelled by the materialistic philosophy of communism. While lost in the wilderness of skepticism and relativism and starved for tran-

scendent values, he heard a voice that promised to lead him out of the wilderness and to stay his thirst and hunger. This voice, in its political mysticism and *heroica,* seemed to offer a higher plane of living where the average individual was to be elevated from the position of a mere economic atom to that of a pillar of the nation and the race, both building up toward higher values. In his thirst and hunger for the transcendental, the average German did not stop to reflect, nor did he notice, or if he did, was not shocked by, the harshness, the brutality, or the narrowness of the Nazi romanticism. He followed the voice of the Führer.

Chapter VIII

GERMAN IMPETUS AND ITS SURPRISES

ADAGIO—PRESTO FURIOSO

Nietzsche said that "the Germans are a dangerous people; they are expert at inventing intoxicants." [1] We have tried to point out that the conciliation or the "marriage" between "totalitarianism" and "infinitism" occurs, precisely, through the intoxication of an overpowering impetus, the *urdeutsche Wucht,* or the *furor teutonicus* as the Roman poet Marcus Annaeus Lucanus (d. A.D. 65) called it. In this union which tends to turn the inner discord, or the dualism, of the German soul into a harmony, and which seeks to regenerate Germany and make it the Prometheus of mankind, whether mankind wish it or not, the spirit of "totalitarianism" is to be the master. A young university student explained in a letter from the front how such a union took place in him:

> "The universe taken as a whole is characterized by harmony, meaningfulness, and greatness. The individual, on the other hand, is the picture of disharmony; but this disharmony is necessary in order that harmony may be born from sheer strength and impetus." [2]

[1] *Peoples and Countries,* Paragraph 7.

[2] *Briefe gefallener Studenten, cit.,* S. 300. Letter of Hans Mierisch, student of philosophy, Leipzig, born in January, 1897, died from wounds in May, 1917.

The extraordinary German capacity for impetus manifests itself in various aspects of national life. The language of a nation is said to be the mirror in which its soul is reflected. The German language is characterized by the tendency to climaxes in diction and sentence structure. The long compound words in which several concepts are welded to wind up the last root in the compound to a powerful spring may also be recalled. In distinction from the clear, concise French sentence, the German sentence is tinged with a Dionysian tension resolving itself in a climax—the predicate is withheld until the end of the sentence. Talleyrand, during a conversation with a group of diplomats which was conducted, as sometimes happens, in several languages simultaneously, each interlocutor using his mother tongue, showed a tense expectation while the German member of the group was making a point. Someone asked Talleyrand, "What are you waiting for?" "For the verb," answered the witty Frenchman.[1] German conversation is to a large extent free from the reserve, subtle reticences, and evasive circumlocutions characteristic of English conversation. A typically German conversation is a kind of crusading, as of the Nibelungen search for the Rhinegold; it usually ends in a climax, sometimes quite gripping. A prolonged German conversation, even when the interlocutor is a perfect stranger and a foreigner besides, has in it the lovely element of lyricism, or confession of faith, which may at times, in the words of Keyserling, "outrage every rule of good sense by telling the whole truth." [2]

A long catalogue of the peculiarities of German impetus might be compiled; but limitations of our study restrict us to a brief analysis of what seem to be its principal surprises

[1] Lacour-Gayet, G., *Talleyrand,* Paris, Payot, 1931, t. III, p. 430.
[2] Keyserling, H., *Europe, cit.,* p. 126.

when regarded from the viewpoint of international repercussions as well as the training of the future German leaders.

One of such surprises is that German impetus does not require as a motive a definite objective; on the contrary, the objective may be left quite indefinite, but it must necessarily have the touch of grandeur. "The German's delight," rightly says Herr F. Sieburg, "in the formative process contrasts with the Frenchman's delight in the finished object." [1] M. Paul Valéry has also uncovered some of the vital peculiarities of German impetus. He pointedly speaks of the German's "strange virtue of fulness, oneness, fatalistic furor for doing, for becoming, for transforming, for not leaving at the end of one's life the sensible world what it was at the time of one's birth." [2] His analysis of the German delight in "becoming" (*Werden*) as over and against "being" (*Sein*) also merits quotation in this connection:

> "We have fooled ourselves about German 'indefiniteness.' Because in France all that has vitality possesses clear contours, the absence of sharp profiles in the masses beyond the Rhine has led us to suppose in them lack of cohesion. In reality, the absence of clear form made it possible for this elastic German matter to be poured into any opening. In time of peace we saw how it penetrated into the porous neighboring countries. It is precisely to her lack of contour that Germany owes her prodigious power of expansion." [3]

Oswald Spengler showed a keen insight into the national psychology of his people when he pointed out that the im-

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 69.
[2] *Oeuvres*, Edition de la N.R.F., t. 5, p. 110.
[3] "Réflexions sur l'Allemagne," *Oeuvres, cit.*, t. 9, p. viii.

petuous German "formlessness" is one of the causes of the inclination to "Caesarism," in other words to a totalitarian or dictatorial form of government.[1]

Another important surprise of the *urdeutsche Wucht* consists in the alternation, in one and the same person, between impetuous action and dreamy abandon; the latter serves as the recreation from the former and must not be mistaken, as it has often been, for indolence, meekness and organic harmlessness—at least not during the climax period of a totalitarian epoch. Goethe's charming poem "Discord" (*Zwiespalt*) may be recalled in this connection:

"When by the brook his strain
  Cupid is fluting,
And on the neighboring plain
  Manors disputing,
There turns the ear ere long,
  Loving and tender,
Yet to the noise the song
  Soon must surrender.
Loud then the flute-notes glad
  Sound 'mid war's thunder;
If I grow raving mad,
  Is it a wonder?
Flutes sing and trumpets bray,
  Waxing yet stronger;

[1] "By the term 'Caesarism' I mean that kind of government which, irrespective of any constitutional formulation that it may have, is in its inward self a return to thorough formlessness. . . . Real importance is centered in the wholly personal power exercised by the Caesar, or by anybody else capable of exercising it in his place. It is the return of a form-filled world into primitivism, into the cosmic historyless. Biological stretches of time once more take the place vacated by historical periods." (*The Decline of the West, cit.*, Vol. II, p. 431.)

If, then, my senses stray,
Wonder no longer."[1]

Victor Hugo praising the musical genius of the German people observed, in the *Année terrible,* that German music alternates the cry of the eagle with the song of the sky lark. A contemporary French student of the German national character drew an interesting parallel between German music and German mentality:

> "German music has its surprises. It readily passes from tender and sentimental adagio to a sudden explosion of bugles, trumpets, drums and timbals. So does the German soul. We must therefore not let ourselves be lulled by the soft and tender part of its song."[2]

Count H. Kessler in his memoirs of Bismarck speaks of the Iron Chancellor's—

> "astounding aptitude to *volte-face,* stupefying alternation between granite hardness pushed to the point of brutality, and wheedling (*câlinerie*) almost feminine, carried to the point of the most refined flattery and subtlest charm. One might say that he had inherited from rude peasants of the Brandenburg lowland the power of sheer strength and from the imperial and royal courts of the time of Nicholas I and Metternich their favored art of ruse and slyness."[3]

Dr. Gustav Stresemann, before the collapse of the German military power in the World War, was one of the leading

[1] *The Poems of Goethe Translated in the Original Metres* by Edgar Alfred Browning, London, George Bell's Sons, 1891, p. 387.
[2] Redslob, R., "Les impressions de Munich," *Le Temps,* 1er novembre 1929.
[3] "Souvenirs sur Bismarck," *Revue de Paris,* 1er mai 1936, pp. 10 f.

public men most disinclined to a peace of compromise; in fact, he supported the not too modest or moderate peace terms wished for by Hindenburg and Ludendorff.[1] Later, after the loss of the war, when time came to court France in the person of M. Aristide Briand, Dr. Stresemann became again, for the occasion, the "dreamy Jörg" [2] of his youth, Traumjörg, as his mother called him. The Prussian eagle turned a dove of peace, "Stresemann the European." Dr. Stresemann played his diplomatic game, which he himself explains in a letter to the former German Crown Prince written at the time of the Locarno flirtations,[3] so much the more successfully as he was genuine in his pacifist *Herzenergiessungen* at the time of those memorable Geneva and Locarno heart-to-heart talks with Briand. He thereby achieved the advanced evacuation of the Rhine zone by the Allies.

Another significant feature of German impetus through which the discord between "totalitarianism" and "infinitism" is brought to a harmony, is the tendency to expend the totalitarian impetus, at least during the climax of a totalitarian epoch, in an indomitable Siegfriedian fighting spirit made of an unusual admixture of Dionysian mysticism and sheer totalitarian impetus. Such fighting spirit pervaded and sustained the warriors of the *Nibelungenlied:*

[1] For Germany's plan of conquest *see* Baker, N., *Why We Went to War,* New York, Harper & Brothers, 1936, pp. 18 ff.

[2] Stresemann, G., *Vermächtnis,* Berlin, Verlag Ullstein, B. I, SS. 529, 532.

[3] Demiashkevich, M., *Shackled Diplomacy, cit.,* p. 40. Cf. also the following bit of conversation between Briand and Stresemann, recorded—or realistically imagined—by a biographer of Stresemann: "Briand.—You worry me with your Stahlhelm. Your people are so self-important—and they feel like nothing on earth when they have clapped a helmet on their heads. Stresemann.—You misjudge them; that's just an innocent national impulse. Our Reichswehr Minister Gessler found the right explanation for these people. They want to be able to offer the servant girls as much as the soldiers ever did—militia bands, gay uniforms, and last but not least, kisses." (Valentin-Luchaire, *Stresemann,* New York, Richard R. Smith, 1931, p. 246.)

"It is suffused with a glamor of the supernatural, with a weird magnificence, both of nature and of man. Its actors are led on, or thrust on, by inevitable doom, their fates are foretold to them, and they go clear-eyed to the consummation of all. There is no pettiness about any of them, they are all molded on the heroic scale, and the light about them is not the light of common day." [1]

It was, doubtless, German soldiers of Siegfriedian caliber that decided the issue of the battle in the Teutoburger Forest (A.D. 9) in which the Roman legions of Varus were destroyed by Arminius (or Hermann) and his warriors; likewise warriors of that caliber won for Germany its subsequent successful battles. To the performance of their descendants who are our contemporaries and who fought the battles of the World War, T. E. Lawrence paid the following tribute, well deserved though couched in his peculiarly high-pitched style:

"I grew proud of the enemy who had killed my brothers. They were two thousand miles from home, without hopes and without guides, in conditions mad enough to break the bravest nerves. Yet their sections held together, in firm rank, shearing through the wrack of Turk and Arab like armoured ships, high-faced and silent. When attacked

[1] Sway, A., *The Lay of the Nibelungen Men,* p. X.

Note: This tendency to expend the impetus in *res militaris* is reflected in an anecdote which the author recalls reading in an Austrian newspaper and which is related to the postwar adaptation, partly genuine and partly camouflage, of war industries to the manufacturing of peace time goods, such as furniture or agricultural implements. A workman employed at one such factory, the metamorphosis of which was furniture making, was returning home after the day's work. In the course of conversation with a friend, the former munition worker remarked that he again had failed to make a baby carriage that he had promised to his wife. When his fellow asked why wouldn't he stay at the factory after work several evenings and make the perambulator, he received this answer: "The trouble is that whenever I start making the perambulator, it turns into a machine gun."

they halted, took position, fired to order. There was no haste, no crying, no hesitation. They were glorious." [1]

During a totalitarian epoch the German's very world woe (*Weltschmerz*) is susceptible to transformation into the enthusiasm for an imperialistic international policy. This enthusiasm is then embellished with a certain kind of Dionysian poetic glow. What the Crown Prince of Germany called, in his recollection of the second battle of the Marne in July, 1918, "the apocalyptic symphony of destruction" [2] had for the Siegfriedian combatants the romantic fascination experienced by Fieldmarshal von der Goltz, who wrote in a letter to his son:

"I thoroughly enjoy the wild poetry of war and I have formed a perhaps un-Christian fondness for it against which I cannot defend myself." [3]

Still other surprise inherent in German impetus is that it is not an uncontrollable mob hysteria, but is entirely compatible with discipline: *Wucht mit Zucht.*

Hitler wanted to give to the National Socialist movement a vehement character; he declared in *Mein Kampf:*

"The future of a movement is conditioned upon fanaticism, the intolerance with which its supporters assert themselves as the only orthodox representatives of the idea embodied in the movement." [4]

The Minister for Propaganda, Dr. Paul Goebbels, addressing the National Socialist party functionaries, contrasted the power of decision possessed by the Third Reich with the lack of it

[1] From *Seven Pillars of Wisdom,* by T. E. Lawrence, pp. 633 f., copyright 1926, 1935, by Doubleday, Doran and Co., Inc., New York.
[2] Kuhl, H., *Der Weltkrieg, cit.,* B. II, S. 380.
[3] *Op. cit.,* S. 362. [4] *Op. cit.,* S. 384.

shown "by certain European powers." Alluding to England and her indecision during the Italian conquest of Ethiopia, he said, not without contempt:

> "The States that have undertaken to preserve order in the world have demonstrated that they are completely incapable of doing so. They have no power and if they had it they would probably be too cowardly to use it." [1]

The exaltation of the "total man," of the strong hand, of vehement action, of heroic death, had led some observers of German affairs to fear an imminent outbreak of another world conflagration, an explosion of national military fury which the Government that conjured it might not be able to control. These fears proved unfounded. The German people is showing itself fully possessed of discipline. Unless and until the Government calls the nation to a military action, the individual seems readily persuaded by the leaders to expend the surplus impetus in conquering himself, in making himself a better member of his profession or vocation and above all a better German after the image of the Führer.

This strict "discipline of work," preparatory to the supreme drive "for the realization of the highest value," will, Dr. Rosenberg predicts, be borne by the nation joyously during long years.[2] Did not Hitler give the watchword when he declared in *Mein Kampf* that the justice of his foreign policy "will not be recognized until after barely a hundred years, two hundred and fifty million Germans are living on this continent"? [3] Subsequently the Führer unfolded before a Nuremberg Nazi Convention his intentions, already fore-

[1] Wireless to the New York *Times*, July 5, 1936.
[2] *Op. cit.*, S. 485; Wireless to the New York *Times*, July 5, 1936.
[3] *Op. cit.*, S. 767.

shadowed in *Mein Kampf,* to take away from Russia practically all her rich lands. He painted a picture of plenty which such acquisition would bring in contrast with Germany's present difficult struggle against the shortage of raw material. He added, however, that the task of conquering Russia might take a generation. It may be said that diplomatic considerations—the wish to keep not only the Bolshevist Government of Russia, but also the British and the French governments off their guard—made desirable the greatest qualification of that most war-like declaration ever made by the Führer thus far. Even so, the Führer doubtless knew that with regard to domestic as well as internation affairs he could safely indulge in the most dangerous form of diplomacy—diplomacy by incontinent menace and excitement. He knew he could appeal at one and the same time in his speech to his people's impetus and discipline; from the former he could expect, as response, a totalitarian determination and effort, from the latter, no less a totalitarian patience.

IMPETUS VERSUS JUDGMENT

Among the far-reaching surprises inherent in German impetus are also instances of astonishingly poor judgment on the part of German leaders—instances of intelligence blinded by impetus.[1] A few historical cases will suffice to exemplify this particular German surprise. These illustrations, taken from among the well-established facts of the World War, its antecedents, and aftermath, come under three interrelated sources:

[1] Cf. Chamberlain, H. S., *op. cit.,* Vol. I, p. 576:
"Who could help crying with Ulrich von Hütten: 'Oh! unhappy Germany, unhappy by thine own choice! Thou that with eyes to see seest not, and with clear understanding understandest not!' . . . Luther went so far as to call the Germans 'blind people.' "

the lack of comprehension of the psychology of the opponents and neutrals; the underestimation of the powers of the adversary; the lack of ability correctly to adjust the objectives of an action to the nation's true power of endurance—in other words, the overestimation of the nation's strength or the tendency to undertake more than one can do.

An English military observer of the Germans during the World War and the aftermath wrote: "Give a German a human being to study and he will make a mess of it. Give him a thing to study and he will probably do better than anyone else." [1] This somewhat overdrawn statement contains a good deal of truth. German diplomats and military leaders were on several historical occasions guilty of poor psychological insight into the mind of foreign nations. For example, in 1912 the British made their last attempt to come to an agreement with the Germans on the limitations of naval armaments—the diplomatic event known as the Haldane mission. The German plans for an increase of their naval power, far in excess of the needs of national defense on the *status quo* basis, were considered by the British as dangerous to their imperial position. The Germans were not inclined to make an agreement but wanted to profit by the British overtures in order to maneuver Great Britain into the abandonment of the *entente* with France and Russia. What means did the Germans think best fitted for their goal? They chose to bully Great Britain with an announcement of a further considerable naval building program, as an opening for the negotiations. The choice proved very unwise. M. Raymond Poincaré, in a conversation with the British Ambassador to France, Sir Francis Bertie, on this injudicious move of the German Gov-

[1] Roddie, S., *Peace Patrol,* New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1933, p. 251.

ernment, showed an understanding justified by the subsequent course of international events:

> "Monsieur Poincaré made some remarks on the strange ignorance which Germans in general seemed to have of the characteristics of races other than their own. The German Government in their dealings with France had given proof of that ignorance [1] and he hoped that the intended increase of the German navy just announced, which was a strange way of approaching the British public with the view to friendly negotiations, would keep open their eyes to the real designs of Germany." [2]

The conduct of German-American relations in 1915-1916 which made inevitable the participation of the United States in the World War on the side of the Allies, is too well known to insist on it here as an example of the poor psychological judgment exercised by the German Government at the time.

The German Supreme Command also badly misjudged the intellectual acumen of President Wilson and the Allied statesmen when Hindenburg and Ludendorff forced the Imperial Chancellor Prince Max of Baden to address to the Allies through the medium of the President the request for an armistice; it proved to be premature from the military point of view and a poor calculation diplomatically. The Supreme Command hoped to hoodwink the "doctrinary fellow," [3] as von Hindenburg characterized the President. After a superficial democratization of the Government of Germany under Prince Max, the German governing circles, in particular the

[1] Cf. Sieburg, F., *op. cit.*, p. 68.

[2] *British Documents, cit.*, Vol. V, No. 585: Sir Francis Bertie to Sir Edward Grey, Paris, May 16, 1912. *See* also our *Shackled Diplomacy, cit.*, pp. 183 ff.

[3] Ludwig, E., *Hindenburg*, Philadelphia, John C. Winston Co., 1935, p. 114.

Supreme Command, wanted the world to believe that "deeply-rooted constitutional changes" had taken place in German national life[1] and expected the armistice conditions to leave intact the military power of Germany—the power which had shown itself as the mortal danger to any nation or nations that might happen to be the object of envy or displeasure of Germany. Naturally, subsequent events showed the rulers of Germany that they had expected too much; *inde irae*—the legend of "Wilson's betrayal."[2]

Another interesting case in point is afforded by the diplomatic sublety, rather overdone, which was employed by the German armistice commission at the beginning of the negotiations—a diplomacy of sheer "nerve," so to speak, which struck back as an additional humiliation. When the German commission headed by Minister without Portfolio Herr Matthias Erzberger were asked by Marshal Foch to state the purpose of their visit, Herr Erzberger replied that the German commis-

[1] Cf. the Fourth German Note to President Wilson of October 27, Temperley, H. W. V., *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 456.

[2] Cf. the following entry in Dr. Harvey Cushing's diary: "Most important and significant of all was the news that came to us Sunday of the proposal from Max of Baden, the new Chancellor, for an armistice.

"Weary as we all are of the war, the response seems to have been unanimous—unconditional surrender—and we feel that it is but a clever dodge to let the Boche get off with a whole skin and withdraw his troops and stores quietly from France and Belgium rather than to do so with the Allies snapping at his heels. It's just like the "KAMERAD" of the machine gunner who has fired till the last minute and then throws up his hands, expecting to be spared. A Prussian squeal, in fact.

"On July 31, 1914, they gave France 18 hours to declare that in the event of a Russo-German war she would remain neutral, betray her ally and as a guarantee give up Toul and Verdun to Germany till the end of the war. No one believes in Germany's honesty of purpose. This is no offer to make Peace. It's a proposal to halt the present battle, which is going against her, while she discusses President Wilson's peace principles. It's a matter for Foch, not for President Wilson to decide, and the only possible terms are for her to lay down her arms." (From *Leaves from a Surgeon's Journal*, by Harvey Cushing, an Atlantic Monthly Press Publication, p. 467. Reprinted by permission of Little, Brown & Company.)

sion came to receive the proposals of the Allied Powers looking to an armistice on land, on sea, and in the air, on all the fronts, and in the colonies. Marshal Foch replied that he had no proposals to make. In the end the German delegation had to declare, of course, that they came to sue for an armistice.[1]

Another piece of misplaced diplomatic subtlety designed by poor psychological judgment, occurred soon afterward. The armistice terms included the immediate surrender of the larger part of the German High Seas Fleet into the custody of the British who acted in behalf of the Allied and Associated Powers. When on November 21, 1918, the Grand Fleet received the submission of the German ships, it was an event without parallel in the history of naval warfare. In the space of twenty-four hours a country that had been dreaming, not at all idly, of sea domination was reduced to the level of a fifth-rate naval power. One can understand, of course, the state of mind of the German Admiral and his officers, and of the men not converted to the Spartacist point of view, who had to go through the ordeal; one can sympathize in particular with the reluctance to haul down the German flag by order of the British Admiral. The latter humiliation, however, could have been avoided. The German Admiral could have hauled his flag down of his own accord or replaced it with some emblem of mourning, and thus escaped the humiliation of taking a crushing order from the enemy. It would have been more *chic* to do so, but the German Admiral undertook an utterly futile game of finessing. He protested to Admiral Beatty the severity of the order, asserting that the status of his ships was that of a neutral in a neutral port. He received the reply, such as he should have anticipated, to the effect that a

[1] *The Memoirs of Marshal Foch,* New York, Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1931, pp. 467 ff.

state of war still existed, that the German ships were in custody and that no enemy vessel could be permitted to fly her colors in a British harbor.[1]

It has become evident that the Germans have in many regards profited by their defeat more than the Allied and Associated powers by their victory. Diplomacy, however, which in substance is the art of correct psychological judgment based on an intimate knowledge of other lands, has not become a strong point with the Germans. True, they have improved considerably the selection and training of their diplomats; substantial training in international affairs is given the general staff officers.[2] True, also, German diplomacy has well understood

[1] Rowson, G., *Earl Beatty: Admiral of the Fleet,* London, Jarrods, Second Impression, 1930, pp. 212 ff.

[2] Cf. the following summary of the new German ideas on the importance of this educational objective taken from Professor Ewald Banse's volume, *Germany Prepares for War,* pp. 69 f., copyright, 1934, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., New York:

"Nations go to war because one wants to impose its will on the other and the other objects; but the actual conflict is simply a test of strength and is governed by its own laws. This test of strength is only apparently a question of armaments and preparations; in reality and at bottom it is a moral affair, in the course of which it must become clear which of the two parties has the stouter heart and the tougher character. He who would measure his strength against another's must not only be in good form himself, but must also know his adversary thoroughly. If he does not, he may meet with some very unpleasant surprises. . . .

"One can never take one's opponent—any opponent, whether another nation or an opposing party—too seriously. It is fatal to underrate him; this has been proved over and over in every colonial war during the past hundred years, and the fact that big Austria-Hungary was unable to dispose of little Serbia without our help speaks volumes. It is surprising how often the story of David and Goliath repeats itself. He who takes the field believing in his victory as a foregone conclusion, is pretty certain to be defeated. For victory means concentrating one's strength to the utmost, putting one's whole soul into the struggle, and having no desire left but to fight and win. 'I shall fight before Paris, I shall fight in Paris, I shall fight behind Paris,' cried Clemenceau, but the Germans turned back at the Marne though they need not have done so. . . .

"The essence of all preparation for war is getting to know one's enemy, judging his strong and his weak points in laborious detail. This prevents waste of strength and resources, which would otherwise be expended in

and played up the weakness and dissensions of the Great European Powers, which often fully deserved the nickname given to them by Bismarck during one of the interminable Balkan crises, *les grandes impuissances.* On the other hand, some major moves of German diplomacy suggest that German impetus still has the upper hand in the conduct of diplomatic affairs.

Furthermore, if the Führer has sought to achieve bloodless conquests by intimidating the world into territorial concessions to Germany, it seems that he has miscalculated. The fear

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wrong directions, and enables everything to be concentrated on the vital points in the enemy's position. One must know whether the enemy is weak or strong, whether he is of a stubborn or yielding disposition, whether he is implacable or inclined to negotiate, whether his nerves are sensitive or the reverse, whether he has character or not, whether he is nimble-witted or slow-witted, apt to go to pieces or hard as steel, accessible to enemy propaganda or not. This may be illustrated by examples taken from the Great War.

"The Germans underrated most of their enemies and overrated their allies, at least their principal ally, whose concealed decomposition into separate nationalities they had never properly realized. Above all, the Germans had no notion of the tenacity and organizing power of the Anglo-Saxons on both sides of the Atlantic. Nobody in responsible circles ever expected that England would raise an army a million strong and send it to France within a year, and would put close on 10,000,000 men altogether into the field. No one would have dreamed that America would have more than 2,000,000 men in France within eighteen months of declaring war. And why not? After all, these Englishmen and Scotsmen, and these Americans are our closest kinsmen and endowed with very much the same capacities for thought and effort, action and achievement. . . .

"Of the French, too, we had formed a wrong estimate. They were supposed by us to be degenerate and effeminate. Our rulers did not know that the French upper class consists of hard-bitten Northerners who know how to impose their authority on the masses and maintain it by brutal force. The Frenchman not only made a nimble and skillful soldier, with a much better idea of how to conduct himself in the field than the Englishman, whose strong suit is rather holding and sticking it out; but he also proved a bitter and determined foe, who knew very well that the war was a matter of life and death for his people and his country. His determination and his intelligence—these were his two strong points. In view of the latter it was a bad blunder on the part of our higher command, in launching their fourth great offensive in July, 1918, to follow exactly the same tactics as had been successful in the three previous ones."

aroused is far beyond the degree that would be desirable from the German point of view. To say nothing of the would-be victims themselves, the nations less directly concerned, such as might have been willing to countenance the satisfaction of Germany's territorial needs or even mere appetites at the expense of the other fellow—for instance, of the unlucky Russia crippled by the communistic Soviet regime—and thus to preserve international peace, appear to be reluctant to give Germany the encouragement she desires for despoiling the other fellow. The world at large appears to have been so frightened by what seem to be the ultimate intentions of the Nazi leadership that all more or less amicable cession of territory to the Germans is generally regarded tantamount to furnishing them additional sources of war munition against itself.

The blinding effect of impetus upon the evaluation of the worth of the adversary has also repeatedly directed the councils of the German Supreme Command and Government. One or two instances may be recalled that clearly proved a grave hindrance to the realization of the German hope, not so light-mindedly formed, to win the war.

The mighty German drive for the bulk of the French armies which were retreating southwest, first in the general direction of Paris and later even southeast of the capital, ended in the loss of the battle of the Marne because of a certain carelessness of the German Supreme Command[1] in not providing for the

[1] The organization of the German Supreme Command was as follows: "The Kaiser was the Supreme War Lord, in other words, Commander-in-Chief of the Army and the Navy. Theoretically he exercised his command through the Prussian Chief of the General Staff of the Army and the Navy. In actual practice orders were issued by the Chief of Staff in the Kaiser's name, and the Chief of Staff was the actual Commander-in-Chief who merely procured the Kaiser's concurrence in any important decision." (Neame, P., Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel, *German Strategy in the Great War*, London, Edward Arnold & Co., 1923, pp. 3 f.) At the beginning of the World War the Chief of the General Staff and, consequently, the real

principal operation sufficient numbers. This error was due to the intoxicated and intoxicating reports from field units, uncritically accepted by the Commander-in-Chief, which described the phalanxes of the Kaiser as sweeping before them the utterly demoralized and defeated French and English divisions. As a result, it came as a surprise which indeed demoralized the German Supreme Command when Joffre's troops, which were supposed to be running away in complete disorder, turned about and attacked the Germans September 6, 1914.

Among other irreparable errors committed by the Supreme Command and comprehensible only in the light of intoxication with the totalitarian impetus was the error of exposing the right flank of the First German Army to an attack from Paris. In the words of Marshal Galliéni, "the savior of Paris,"—

> "the Germans had already made the error of underestimating the power of resistance of the Belgians thought incapable of opposing the invasion of their country by the Germans. Now they were going toward a bitter disappoint-

Commander-in-Chief was General von Moltke. After his retirement as a consequence of losing the battle of the Marne, General von Falkenhayn was appointed Chief of Staff. Next, after the loss of the battle of Verdun by Falkenhayn, von Hindenburg was made Chief of Staff in the summer of 1916 and Ludendorff his Quartermaster General. These two men, in the last analysis Ludendorff as the more able of the two, and their immediate technical advisers were the Supreme Command. The Kaiser, overwhelmed with events, and a weak individual at heart, acquiesced in everything that the Supreme Command proposed. At the slightest opposition on his part, Hindenburg and Ludendorff threatened him with their resignation, which the Kaiser feared to face in view of their great popularity with the nation and his own growing unpopularity. He found an outlet for his impotent rage at the Generals' independence in the outpourings of his marginal remarks written on the copies of newspaper articles, and in heartily approving hints at the usurpation by the Generals of the supreme authority, not only in military but also in civil matters. *See* Rosenberg, A., *The Birth of the German Republic, cit.*, pp. 129 f.

ment in imagining that the Army of Paris would remain immobile within the fortified camp awaiting with dread the arrival of the enemy. In the afternoon of September 4 this illusion was dissipated." [1]

Marshal Joffre, looking back at the events in which he took the leading part, reflected as follows upon the German error under consideration:

"The German soldiers and civilians, generals and diplomats, were the worst psychologists, very fortunately indeed for the French. If they had had, along with all their other qualities, the one that was lacking in them, a feeling for shades of difference, an exact understanding of other peoples, they might have made themselves masters of the universe. Kluck [2] was persuaded that this long retreat, which he interpreted as almost complete rout, had sapped the morale, the fighting spirit of both the English and the French troops. The ordinary precautions which he probably would have the good sense to take against a seriously dangerous opponent, seemed to him henceforth unnecessary in dealing with the French and British armies." [3]

As still another significant case in point, it may be recalled how the expectations relative to the effect of the submarine

[1] *Mémoires du Maréchal Galliéni,* Payot, Paris, 1920, p. 121.

[2] General von Kluck, Commander of the First Army.

[3] Recouly, R., *Joffre,* New York, D. Appleton-Century Co., 1931, pp. 145 f. Cf. also Field-Marshal French, *German Mentality,* Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1919, p. 107: "The first necessity for the enemy was a quick decision by a great victory to be achieved at once. They were outmarching their supplies; there was Russia to be crushed and their frontier to be secured; and further, a prolonged campaign was what they desired to avoid at all costs. The desperate attempt was no sooner fairly launched than the fatal error of over-confidence and the folly of underrating one's enemy stared at them in the face with all its stupendous consequences."

campaign upon the fighting capacity of the Allied countries, particularly England, serious though that effect was, proved to be greatly exaggerated by the German naval authorities. Blinded with the successful beginnings of the submarine campaign, the Germans made two capital errors: they failed to provide a sufficient number of submarines, which would have been entirely within the capacity of German industries, and they also undervalued the ability of the Allies to provide means of defense against the submarine. According to General von Kuhl the following was the way in which things went amiss in this campaign:

> "Representatives of industries declared at a meeting held at the Reich Ministry of the Marine in June, 1916, that they could double the construction of submarines on the condition that a definite building program was immediately authorized. In reality the Ministry of the Marine did not call for the services of all the available private shipyards. The Ship Yard Department of the Ministry as it is now known did not want to place large orders for submarines; they asked themselves the question what they would do with a large number of submarines when peace has been concluded. Evidently peace was believed much closer than it was. One cannot help thinking what effect the submarine warfare would have produced if we had in February, 1917, two hundred submarines instead of one hundred! Crews for such a number of submarines could have been drawn from the High Seas Fleet. . . ."[1]

The news that the Allies had decided to use the system of convoys as a means of protection of their freight and passenger traffic received a contemptuous appraisal.

[1] Von Kuhl, H., *op. cit.*, B. II, S. 151.

"Von Hetzendorff [Chief of Naval Staff] believed that conveyed 'trains' of ships were an extraordinarily thankful objective for the submarine; this judgment has in no way been borne out by the events that were to occur. On the contrary the system of convoys caused a considerable increase in our losses of submarines. He further expressed himself as skeptical of the significance which the United States joining the Allies would have for the increase of the tonnage available for the Allies." [1]

In January, 1918, the leader of the *Vaterlandspartei,* Grand Admiral von Tirpitz, the builder of the German naval power, announced: "America's military aid to the Allies is and remains a phantom." [2]

Even though it was denied after the World War, the German military authorities, notably General von Moltke, belittled before and at the beginning of the war the potential weight of a British expeditionary force. "We will send police to have them arrested," was the saying. The Americans were given, in a statement made to the Reichstag by Admiral Capelle, the rating of a negligible quantity militarily. The Admiral declared that while the Americans had a vast man power, they had no officers or noncommissioned officers to train the men; that even if they succeeded in training their men, the difficulties of transportation would make it impossible to bring American soldiers to Europe in time and in numbers sufficient to play an important role in operations; that, in particular, even if they crossed the ocean, the German submarines

[1] *Ibid.,* S. 161.

[2] Quoted in the deposition of Professor Hans Delbrück before the Commission of Inquiry appointed by the Reichstag to investigate the causes of the loss of the war: Schwertfeger, B., Oberst A. D., *Ursachen des Zusammenbruchs: Entstehung, Durchführung und Zusammenbruch der Offensive von 1918,* Berlin, Verlag von Reimar Hobbing, 1923, S. 231.

would take care that they did not land in Europe—the submarines would sink them when they approached land. The Admiral concluded that America counted for nothing—"first, second, and third time counted for nothing from the military point of view."[1]

Dietrich Schäfer wrote, reflecting on the fate of the First Reich, which ended with the loss of the Italian possessions and the imperial title by the Hohenstaufens in the thirteenth century: "Such was the final result of the policy of the Staufens. They were like the bird that struck too high a flight and could not find the way home."[2] This insufficient sense of what is possible clearly manifested itself at the end of the Second Reich, in the World War. It expressed itself not only in the incorrect estimation on the part of the German authorities of the potentialities of the adversaries but also in the overestimation of the power of endurance, great and admirable as it was, of their own nation. A group of patriotic and clear-sighted "Apollonian" Germans headed by Friedrich Naumann, Professor Jäck, and Dr. Robert Bosch, in a confidential memorandum submitted to General Ludendorff on February 11, 1918, warned the Supreme Command that the sacrifices to be demanded from the nation by the offensive which was being prepared by him for the spring of 1918 would exceed the people's power of endurance. The authors of the memorandum recommended that the German armies remain on the defensive, but that German diplomacy begin an offensive by an unequivocal declaration of the intention to restore full sovereignty to Belgium. Ludendorff, in his reply, overlooked the suggestion relative to Belgium, lectured the authors of the memo-

[1] *See* Kuhl, H., *op. cit.*, B. I, S. 127; also *Die Militärischen Lehren des Grossen Krieges,* herausgegeben von M. Schwarte, Generalleutnant z.D., Berlin, 1920, Ernst Siegfried Millers Sohn.

[2] *Deutsche Geschichte,* Jena, 1922, Verlag von Gustav Fischer, B. I, S. 326.

randum on action as the prerequisite of success, and declared that Germany's action should be a great offensive on the Western Front:

> "Attack has always been the German method of warfare. The German troops wish for peace as much as the people at home, and welcome the prospect of breaking away from trench warfare. The offensive will be not 'one of the general staff,' but one of the German armies and also of the German people, and therefore will succeed, God helping." [1]

This "peace attack" (*Friedenssturm*) which was to bring peace by bringing the Allies to their knees, degenerated into a series of indecisive, exhausting offensives—March 21-July 15, 1918—and finally broke the nerve not only of a considerable percentage of German troops but also that of the Supreme Command itself. Then the latter, with a striking Dionysian inability to sense how much was possible, at the end of September, 1918—without transition and after the assertion, continuous until then, of the impregnability of the front—informed the alarmed ranking members of the Reichstag that the strategic situation had become hopeless and that the breakdown of the front might occur any day.

At nine o'clock the morning of October 2, Vice-Chancellor von Payer introduced to the assembled Reichstag party leaders Major Baron von dem Busche, a special representative of the Supreme Command. Speaking from a note approved by Ludendorff, this messenger gave to his listeners the staggering news and then demanded that nothing which might betray weakness should be permitted to occur: "If the peace offer be made, you at home must show a firm front, to prove that you

[1] Schwertfeger, B., *cit.*, SS. 72 ff.

have the will to continue the fight if the enemy refuses us peace or offers only humiliating conditions. . . ." "In this speech," says Ludendorff in his memoirs, "Baron von dem Busche pressed both my program and my views." [1] In his totalitarian blindness, Ludendorff—that undoubtedly superior military leader—made an elementary psychological blunder when he overestimated as he did the power of mental endurance of the German public. In all earnestness, Ludendorff expected something that even the German public with its totalitarian obedience could not perform. At his instance, the Government was to address to President Wilson the armistice note. This was a clear enough admission that the war had been lost and that all the sacrifices the nation had hitherto stout-heartedly borne had been in vain. And yet Ludendorff expected that public opinion, for four long years stimulated with promises of a smashing victory, would show a complete calm and firmness calculated to impress, indeed to scare the Allies into peace terms agreeable to Germany, as if nothing had happened. In the characterization of the French biographer of Ludendorff, General Buat, he believed that the Government could turn out morale just as Krupp manufactured guns.[2]

It was in those days in the fall of 1918 that Crown Prince Ruprecht of Bavaria described the real situation on the front in letters to his father, the King of Bavaria, as follows:

> "What I had long feared occurred even earlier than I expected—the defeat. The bow had been overbent and now it finally broke. . . . The situation grows visibily worse. Bad news of the mood of the troops continues coming in. Large units, inclusive of officers, have sur-

[1] Cf. *Ludendorff's Own Story,* New York, Harper & Brothers, 1919, Vol. II, p. 381.

[2] Buat, E.-A.-L., *Ludendorff, cit.,* 1920, p. 55.

rendered themselves and made themselves war prisoners of their own accord. What has been demanded of the troops surpasses all bounds of the bearable." [1]

Qui trop embrace mal étreint, says the old French proverb. Their blinding totalitarian impetus more than once led the Germans into the temptation of biting off more than they could possibly chew. It is not altogether improbable that the future historian will find the Führer's present ambition much in excess of his and Germany's power of accomplishing. At all events, the World War is rich in instances of excessive attempts; some of which are now cited.

The offensive undertaken by the German Supreme Command in the spring and early summer of 1918 is said by more than one competent observer of the World War and student of its history to abound in decisions prompted by the tendency to bite off more than one can chew. Among those more frequently cited is the production of salients in the line of the offensive, such as the one between Montidier and Château-Thierry or the one at St.-Mihiel, where the German Supreme Command, not having the good sense to evacuate it of their own accord, exposed the troops to the demoralizing flanking attack of the adversary. Likewise may be cited the inability of the Supreme Command in useful time to come to the decision of withdrawing without losses their armies to the Antwerp-Maas line, well-fortified and convenient to hold. To Marshal Foch is attributed the statement that if the German had not tried in his retreat to carry with him all his luggage accumulated during the four years of occupation of the French and Belgian territories, he could have made the progress of the Allies much more difficult, slow, and costly.

[1] Kronprinz Ruprecht von Bayern, *Mein Kriegstagebuch,* Berlin, Mittler & Sohn, 1929, B. III, SS. 27 f.

The validity of these criticisms has, however, been denied by the former German Supreme Command and several German writers. The theory of a "stab in the back" by the revolutionaries has been propounded. Fieldmarshal von Hindenburg says in the exordium to his political testament addressed to the German people and their Chancellor: "In 1919 I wrote in my will to the German people: 'We were finished. Just as Siegfried fell under the treacherous spear of the evil Hagen, so our wearied front broke down.' "[1] In all probability this theory is merely a legend created by the Supreme Command and overzealous patriotic German historians, military and civil. It is contested on serious grounds by several authoritative foreign and German writers. But as this is neither time nor place to go into a documentary examination of the merit of the two points of view, we limit ourselves to mentioning a case of the overreaching ambition, the historical authenticity and decisive importance of which is not contested by any worth-while German or foreign student of the World War—the frustration of the celebrated Schlieffen plan in the "frontier battle" of August-September, 1914.

Fieldmarshal Count von Schlieffen (d. 1913) was the Chief of the Army General Staff 1891-1906. A military leader capable of ideas at one and the same time brilliant, resolute, and profound, he conceived a strategical plan for the conduct by Germany of a European war, in which Germany would have as the principal opponents France, Russia, and England.

Neglecting England, perhaps imprudently, the Schlieffen plan demanded that the initial German effort be directed against the French, whose military force was to be annihilated before the Russians, delayed by their immense distances and insufficient means of transport, should be ready to throw their

[1] Associated Press, Berlin, August 15, 1934.

weight into the struggle; having defeated the French, victorious German armies would turn to the Eastern Front and defeat the Russians also. The strategy of the plan, that is the choice of principal objectives, was inspired by a clear lesson of military history. That lesson was concisely formulated by Napoleon when he said that there were many generals in Europe, but they saw too many things; for himself, he declared, he never looked to see anything but the masses, which he tried to destroy, knowing well that if he succeeded in doing that, the rest of the operation would take care of itself. With regard to the method of achieving his first vital objective, von Schlieffen was inspired by Hannibal's strategy in the battle of Cannae.[1] Thus stimulated, Fieldmarshal von Schlieffen worked out a detailed plan which, he believed, would, if properly executed, guarantee the decisive success of Germany in a war against the major European coalition. The center of gravity of the plan was the crushing encirclement (*niederschmetternde Umfassung*) on the Western Front at the very beginning of the war.[2]

[1] On August 2, 216 B.C., by the village of Cannae in the Apulian plain took place a battle between the Carthaginians led by Hannibal who numbered 50,000 men and the Romans led by Consul Terentius Varro, 69,000 strong. The battle was won by Hannibal, at the cost of 6,000 killed and taken prisoners, while the Romans lost 48,000 killed and 3,000 prisoners. The secret of Hannibal's success was the "concentric action," in other words encircling in turn and order the flanks of the enemy and getting behind his formations—"roll up from flank to flank, round up and destroy." *See* Schlieffen, Count A., *Cannae,* Berlin, Mittler & Sohn, 1925, S. 1 ff.

[2] "Das Testament des Grafen Schlieffens," *Operative Studien über den Weltkrieg,* Mittler & Sohn, 1927; Kuhl, H., *op. cit.,* B. I, SS. 7-106; Leinveber, Generalmajor a.D., *Mit Clausewitz durch die Rätsel und Fragen, Irrungen und Wirrungen des Weltkrieges,* Berlin and Leipzig, B. Behrs Verlag, 1926; Ludendorff, E., *Ludendorff's Own Story, cit.;* Recouly, R., *Joffre, J., cit.;* Ironside, Sir E., Major-General, *Tannenberg: The First Thirty Days in East Prussia,* William Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh and London, 1925; Neame, P., *op. cit.;* Banse, O., *op. cit.;* Ministère de la Guerre, *op. cit.,* t. VII-1; Buat, E.-A.-L., *L'Armée allemande pendant la guerre de 1914-1918,* Paris, Chapelot, 1920; *Hindenburg,* Paris, Chapelot, 1921; *Hindenburg et*

In substance, von Schlieffen's strategical plan rested on the advance of an elastic line aimed toward the enemy, with one or both German wings ready to turn inward and envelop the flank of the enemy, when the bulk of the enemy's forces had been located by some portion of the advancing line. In detail, and in its final form, the Schlieffen plan, inherited by his successor General von Moltke, prescribed a lightning-like advance on Lille, en route to Paris, of a very strong right wing pivoting on the fortress of Metz. While the left flank remained stationary as far as Metz and kept the French busy in Alsace-Lorraine, the right wing was to hurry through unarmed neutral Belgium and the Franco-Belgian frontier, unfortified in accordance with the London Treaty of 1834 that guaranteed Belgian neutrality; the Germans were thus to avoid the fortified eastern frontier of France. As the culminating point of the principal operation against France, the Schlieffen plan contemplated the outflanking of the French left wing, driving the French forces up against their eastern frontier and the German left, in other words, destroying the bulk of the French armed forces in a gigantic Cannae. Shortly before his death in his eightieth year in 1913, von Schlieffen advised, "Strengthen the right wing, where decision rests" (*der rechte der deutsche Entschliessungsflügel*). This most Apollonian military testament, the brilliant wisdom of which is recognized even by the least indulgent critics of the work of von Schlieffen, was lost to his Dionysian successor.

Under von Moltke's command prior to the war and in the actual campaign, the Schlieffen plan was weakened by two measures. First, the left German Wing was made stronger than von Schlieffen had recommended and this could be done,

Ludendorff stratèges, Paris, Berger-Levraut, 1923; Koeltz, L., Lieutenant-Colonel, *Le G. Q. G. Allemand et la bataille de la Marne,* Paris, Payot, 1931.

of course, only at the expense of the right wing. The reason for this change of the Schlieffen plan was threefold: the desire to preserve intact the prestige of the German arms by not permitting the enemy to tread on any portion of the soil, not even that of Alsace-Lorraine, under German sovereignty; the reluctance to expose to uneasiness and fear the Duchy of Baden; the belief that the superiority of the German arms would carry a rapid victory at all events. Von Schlieffen, on the contrary, had thought that the invasion by the French of Alsace-Lorraine and even of Baden was a worth-while risk for the Germans, as the French would be so much the weaker on their left flank in the decisive enveloping movement to be executed by the German right.

The second step in the weakening of the Schlieffen plan was taken by von Moltke at the beginning of the war when it had become known that the divisions left in Eastern Prussia to defend it from invasion proved unable to stop the Russian advance, after the Russian Commander-in-Chief, responding to the appeal of the French, threw the Second Russian Army under General Samsonov into Eastern Prussia, even before his concentration was completed and means of communication solidly secured. This rash decision of the Russian Commander-in-Chief the Germans had not foreseen in their peace-time preparations. From sentimental and political reasons and again from their overestimation of their own strength and underrating that of the enemy, the Supreme Command withdrew two army corps from the Western Front and sent them against the Russians, where they arrived, however, too late—after Eastern Prussia was saved in the battle of Tannenberg. The Germans, then, wanted to do much more than in reality they could—they bit off more than they could chew; they desired to win the war speedily, without any damage or even

menace by the adversary to any portion of their own territory. As a result, the German enveloping movement in the West failed through lack of numbers.

Marshal Foch has aptly said that great victories are always won with left-overs. When two contending armies are of almost equal strength, as the right German wing and the left French wing in the battle of the Marne, a comparatively small additional force, just one or two army corps, are sufficient to turn the balance in favor of the party that had at its disposal a few divisions of "left-overs." After the two weakening measures were taken, the Germans found themselves unable —and in their impetus did not think it strictly necessary—to include Paris in their swing, and were outflanked themselves instead of outflanking the opponent. The relatively feeble French Sixth Army, rapidly formed in Paris, profiting by the advantages that the railway system of the capital and the proximity of the arsenal of Paris gave them over the enemy, attacked the left wing of the moving German First Army under von Kluck. This was the opening of the battle of the Marne, the significance of which is summarized by Mr. Winston Churchill in the following gripping passage:

> "The German invasion of France was stopped. 'The avalanche of fire and steel' was not only brought to a standstill, but hurled backwards. The obsession of German invincibility was dispersed. There would be time for all to go to war—time even for the most peaceful and unprepared countries to turn themselves into arsenals and barracks. Surely that was enough. All bent their backs or their heads to the toil of war; and in the instructed circles of the Allies none, and in those of the Germans, few, doubted which way the final issue would go. Never

again need we contemplate the entire surrender of the French Army before any other armies were afoot to take its place. At the very worst there would be parley, negotiation, barter, compromise, and a haggled peace. . . .

"This, by a succession of unforeseeable and uncontrolled events was decided almost at its beginning the fate of the war on land, and little else was left but four years of senseless slaughter. Whether General von Moltke actually said to the Emperor, 'Majesty, we have lost the war,' we do not know. We know anyhow that with a prescience greater in political than in military affairs, he wrote to his wife on the night of the 9th, '"Things have not gone well. The fighting east of Paris has not gone in our favour, and we shall have to pay for the damage we have done."'"[1]

General von Moltke is said by his critics to have been a neurasthenic; perhaps he was one. But was not his condition caused, at least in part, by the inner split, the conflict between "totalitarianism" and "infinitism"? Documents offer a suggestion to this effect. The General wrote to his wife September 7, 1914, the second day of the battle of the Marne:

"A grave decision is going to fall today; our army all along the line from Paris to Upper Alsace is engaged in a battle since yesterday. If I could today by giving my own life obtain victory for Germany I would gladly do it, as thousands of our brothers have done and are doing today. What rivers of blood have flown already! What misery surpassing all description has fallen on thousands of innocent people whose homes and farms have been

[1] *The World Crisis,* New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931, Ch. XI, "Marne."

shelled and burned! When I think of all this I am horrified. I feel responsible for all those terrible things and yet I could not have acted otherwise than I have." [1]

Herr Paul Sheffer, editor of the *Berliner Tageblat,* published at the time of the Olympics in Berlin an article in which he sought to bring about a favorable understanding of things that might seem unpleasant to outsiders. "We have become," he explained, "a nation of mass meetings, mass theatres, mass celebrations, and mass elections." [2] Bismarck used to say, "We Germans can drive Satan from his inferno if we get united." Even if this be so, the solidity of their national unity, like that of any other people, is determined by the degree of the inner harmony or unity of the average individual, and in particular, by the inner harmony or unity possessed by leaders. Is it to be found and can it abide for a long period of time in worldly "totalitarianism"?

Is it not rather to be expected that the other and powerful part of the German soul, the yearning for the otherworldly or the infinite, will sooner or later demand its own? At the present time the German seeks for the Holy Grail in the totalitarian drive toward the totalitarian ends of an earth-chained totalitarian State. Next he will, in all probability, as he did more than once in the past ages, return to the whole-hearted pursuance of the infinite and its truth.

Fatefully, while pursuing his ideal of perfect, monistic happiness made of a "one-piece" world, in turn earthly and heavenly, the German changes the history not only of his own land but of Europe and the world at large. Oscillating between the immanent and the transcendent, between "totali-

[1] Koeltz, L., *op. cit.,* pp. 160 f.
[2] Wireless to the New York *Times,* August 9, 1936.

tarianism" and "infinitism," the German shows himself alternately stronger than the strongest and weaker than the previous manifestation of his strength would make conceivable. At present he is impetuously totalitarian and worldly strong.

Is this present epoch to culminate in events showing that National Socialism was an "enterprise carried through for the realization of impulses already spent"? [1] Or is the Third Reich, before its sunset, going to pass through the stage similar, for example, to the culminating phase of the first totalitarian epoch of German history, the epoch of migration of peoples? In the words of Professor Kuno Francke, that was—

> "the time of colossal political expansion, of radical change in customs, morals, and faith; the time animated with gigantic passion, blind driving power, and ruthless force. Mighty personalities and vehement deeds held the people spellbound. It was as if Germanism were swelling up from its innermost sources; as if its innermost being, its inner urge, its greatness, its vices, the blessings and curse with which it was fraught, in short, its fate came through a shattering explosion to a blinding self-revelation." [2]

Or will the Third Reich find its political end somewhat in the manner of Goethe's butterfly—will it not prove after all a fragile butterfly, even though a huge one, flying super-bombers and Zeppelins armed with Krupp cannons? Will its political and military might not be consumed some day in the totalitarian flame, produced by the immeasured impetus of flight

[1] Johnson, A., "The International House of Cards," *Yale Review*, Spring, 1936, p. 442.

[2] Francke, K., *Die Kulturwerte der deutschen Literatur in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, Berlin, Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1910, B. I, SS. 18 f.

toward the *Endreich,* which conflagration will inflict severe burns not alone to the Third Reich?

Or, more desirable from the point of view of not only the world at large but also the true interests of the German people itself, will the harsh totalitarian forms of the Third Realm mellow down into a synthesis—political, economic, and moral, a civilization of harmony in which God and all men of good will, at home and abroad, will be given rightful consideration?

While the future conceals from us the ultimate issue of the Third Reich it is well to meditate the following thought of Professor H. Oncken, an outstanding German historian:

> "Each fundamental change in the structure of the German State shapes, by repercussion, also the situation in Central Europe. German political changes, therefore, have been more far-reaching in their international significance than those that take place in any other European land. Their influence, at times more negative than positive and vice versa, has marked new epochs not only of German but of European history." [1]

[1] "Deutsche Vergangenheit und die deutsche Zukunft," *Münchner Universitätsreden,* München, Max Hueber Verlag, 1926, S. 11.

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